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THE LITTLE BOY
OF NAZARETH

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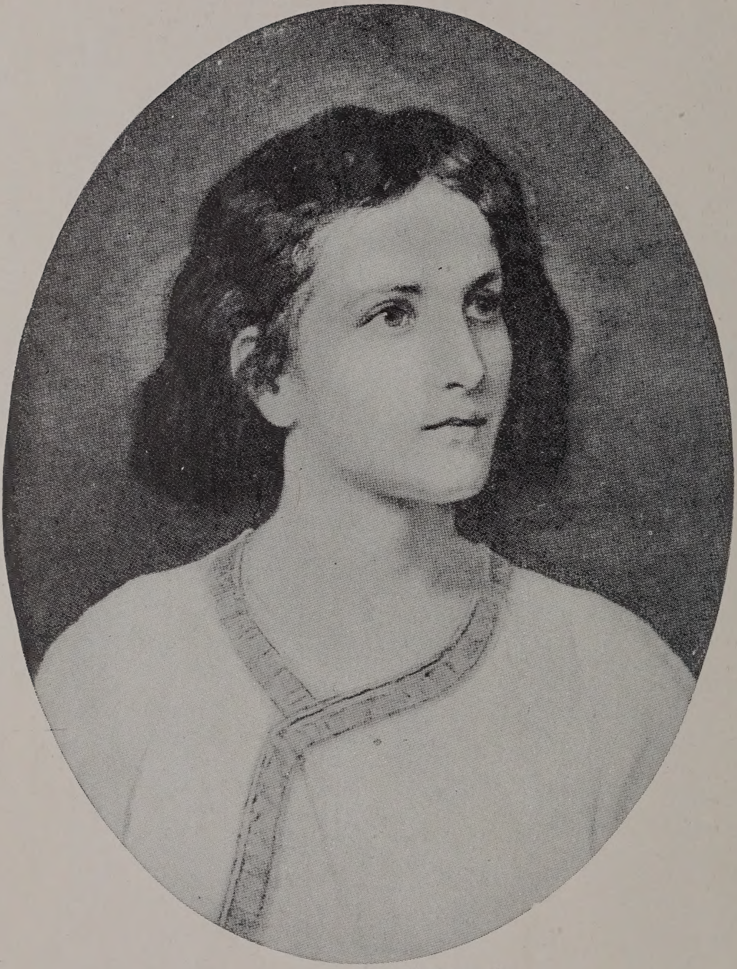

Hoffman.

The Little Boy.

THE LITTLE BOY
OF NAZARETH

BY

Edna Madison Bonser

REIGNER READING ROOM
Princeton Seminary
Princeton, New Jersey

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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FOREWORD

THOUGHTFUL persons are coming to understand more clearly than ever before the almost inestimable importance of the very early years of a child's life in shaping his character. Psychologists are saying that the child's character, in its essential tendencies, is formed by the time he is six years old.

If this is true, must we not in our effort to understand any man, pay intelligent attention to his very early social, economic and religious environment?

That is what the writer of this book has tried to do, with the childhood of Jesus.

None of the stories set down here are true in the sense that they actually occurred, but in a deeper sense they are true in that Jesus' life must have gone on in some such fashion as this. He was a sensitive, thoughtful child in this environment. He was taught the Jewish religion. He probably learned the carpenter's trade. He must have had a sympathetic, scholarly teacher. He must have come into contact with the industrial and social conditions as they existed among his people. He shared their beliefs and their hopes. He was the product of the best of his time religiously, socially and spiritually.

That he was more than his inheritance and his environment, that his superior intellect and spiritual insight chose the good from the bad, that his genius added new interpretations to hackneyed, formalized truths, even contributed new truth, we must recognize.

In this effort to revivify the vital years of first impressions we see him in germ. It is our hope that the children who read the stories and carry out the suggested activities will so see him and that the recognition will help them to realize that his is an admirable character, strong, good and brave; worthy their best love and devotion.

It is hoped too, that the unfolding story of the child of whom it was said, "He grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man," will help other children to comprehend that that Creative Good with which he identified himself and with which he worked to create better conditions among men, is still a living reality functioning in their lives. It is hoped that they will understand as he did that this Creative Good needs their intelligent and persistent cooperation in order to bring about individual and group well-being, not as a chance outcome or as the favor of some superior being, but as the sure result of a spiritual law as undeviating as any law in the natural realm.

EDNA MADISON BONSER.

Leonia, New Jersey.

The Little Boy of Nazareth

THE LITTLE BOY OF NAZARETH

Coming Home

THE little boy[1] never knew whether he really remembered or whether he had heard them tell about it so often that he thought he remembered, but at least it always seemed very real to him.

It was dark. So dark that he could see nothing at all. But he knew without seeing that Dochi, the small gray donkey that carried their belongings, was still padding along ahead of them, his small hard hooves striking sharp on the rocky trail; that his mother was very tired, almost too tired to walk and that even his father Joseph, on whose strong arm he nestled, was almost worn out.

"Is it far now?" he heard his mother ask. She had asked many times.

" 'Tis but beyond the curve of the next great hill, my beloved. Be brave for we shall soon find food and rest in the home of our kinsman.[2] Jehovah[3] forfend and guard us. We put our trust in Thee."

---

[1] *The little boy.* The little boy's name was Joshua ben Joseph. This means the son of Joseph. Joshua when translated into our language becomes Jesus.

[2] *Kinsman.* Father Joseph knew the laws of hospitality among members of a clan or tribe. It was the sworn duty of each member of a clan or tribe to help every other member. This help might be in the form of food, shelter or protection from enemies. It included also the duty of revenge on anyone who had killed or injured a member of the clan. See Deuteronomy 19:21.

[3] *Jehovah.* This was the name of God. Father Joseph probably wouldn't say Jehovah, but Yahweh.

That was all that the little boy remembered. That and the feel of father Joseph's strong kind arms, the spring darkness with the perfume of the almond trees in bloom and the mystery, the loneliness and danger from which Jehovah, whoever that might be, was to forfend. They were on their way from Egypt to Nazareth,[4] father Joseph, Mother and the little boy. Friends had travelled with them almost all of the way but at the last town they had turned aside and the three with Dochi had gone on alone.

It was bright day when the little boy awoke. He was lying on a sheepskin on the floor in the corner of a room. The door stood open and through it he could see the bright sunshine. Some white doves were calling to each other in a vine over the door. Except for their gentle cooing it was very still. He lay for a little while trying to think where he was. He was just beginning to think that perhaps he was afraid when he heard a voice. He sat up to listen. The voice was low and earnest but glad. It said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried away into the midst of the sea."[5] It was father Joseph's voice. But the little boy could see several people in the room. They were sitting on the floor around a low table. Their heads were bowed as though they too were speaking to some one. Who that some one was the little boy could not see. But whoever it was must be very near. He must be right in that very room for no one outside could even hear.

---

[4] *Egypt to Nazareth.* See Matthew 2:13-23 for a description of the journey. The distance between Egypt and Nazareth was probably about four hundred miles. We cannot be certain because we do not know the exact point from which they departed in Egypt. The journey was probably taken on foot with the aid of a donkey to carry supplies since Jesus' people were very poor.

[5] See Psalm 46:1-2 for father Joseph's words.

"We thank thee, God of our fathers, that thou hast guided us safely home; that thou hast guarded us from danger through the trackless deserts and brought us to peace and safety and that the child thou hast given us to keep is ours and thine."

Then the clear voice of some one the little boy had never heard began to sing and all the others joined so that the small dark room with the morning sunshine streaming in at the door was full of music.

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord all the earth." [6]

"The child wakes," said another voice when the last words of the song had died away, and his mother came and lifted him in her arms. When she had given him a piece of bread and a cup of milk the talk around him flowed on and on. Whoever it was they had been talking to had gone away, for now they spoke to each other and it seemed to the little boy that they all talked at once and that no one waited to hear what the other had to say. By and by he grew weary of listening and began to wonder what had become of Dochi. No one noticed when he went quietly out through the low doorway to find Dochi and see what lay beyond.

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[6] The Hallel or song of rejoicing. Psalms 113-18.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find out all you can about ways of travel in Palestine when Jesus was a child. Were the roads wide and smooth and straight? Were they safe from robbers? Were there good hotels where travellers could be cared for? What kinds of food could travellers get? How did they cook it? How did they start their fires? Were there any bridges over the streams? What did Dochi look like? How heavy a load could he carry? How fast could he walk? If it was about four hundred miles from Egypt to Nazareth, how long would it take them to reach Nazareth if they walked fifteen miles a day? What made father Joseph so sure that his kinsman in Nazareth would take him in and care for him? Father Joseph said, "Jehovah guards those who trust in Him." When the little boy, Joshua, was a man he thought of God as being good. Can you think of one way in which goodness is at work in the world today? Is making travel safe and easy one way in which good is at work?

Things To Do.

1. Draw or cut out of paper a picture of Dochi and name some of the things he would carry on his back when he went on a long journey.

2. Draw a picture of father Joseph, Mother and the little boy in camp and show how they kept warm and safe.

3. Find out all you can about the laws of hospitality in Jesus' time and country. Can you think of two rea-

sons why relatives had to help each other? Read Deuteronomy 19:2, 3, 4, Joshua 20:3.

4. Learn the words of the song the little boy heard them sing. Psalm 95:1-7.

5. Learn the words of the prayer father Joseph prayed when he was safely in Nazareth.

In the Courtyard

Sure enough there was Dochi eating his breakfast of fresh grass that some one had cut for him. He looked quite at ease and care-free as though he had altogether forgotten the long, hot, dusty way they had come and the heavy load he had carried. He was not even tied but could wander about in the yard as he wished.[1] There was no one but an old, old man who sat by the gate, to keep him from running away.

The old man dozed in the sunshine though it was so early in the morning. But everything else was awake and stirring about. The little boy sat down on the doorstep to watch, for he felt very strange and new, not quite sure what it would be safe to do. With his bright eyes he watched to see all that was going on. "By and by," he thought, "the old man might waken and tell him a story or his father and mother might decide to load their things on Dochi and travel on to some other place." He hoped they wouldn't because this seemed such a safe, good place and he was so tired of going on and on. Here he could not even see the great hills or the dusty road, for the yard was shut in on every side by great walls in which were doors opening into rooms. There seemed no way to get out except through the gate which the sleepy old man guarded. Why was he so sleepy?

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[1] *The courtyard.* The low flat-roofed houses of Nazareth were sometimes built in a square. The open space left in the center formed the courtyard. In it and on the roofs many of the family activities were carried on. A door or gateway gave access to the street. The courtyard served many purposes. Sometimes it held trees and a cistern. Sometimes it was used as the cooking place, and as stalls for the animals. The people lived largely out of doors in the court or on the roofs.

The little boy had almost made up his mind to go and ask him when some one came to the gate from the outside and looked in, laughing and calling, "Wake up, Sleepyhead, and let us in." The old man stirred and grumblingly set the gate wide then hobbled away through one of the doors in the wall. He seemed so cross that the little boy was glad that he had not asked for a story.

Through the open gates two girls came in, laughing and chattering together. They carried on their shoulders tall jars which held water. They had been early to the fountain.[2] They wore striped brown dresses held at the shoulders by scarlet bands. Sandals were on their feet but their arms and legs were bare and brown. The little boy was glad to see them.

"See what I have," said the taller girl. "Come sit on my lap and I will let you play with it."

As she spoke she drew from her girdle a small flute-like pipe made of stone.[3] It was a shepherd's pipe which gave a shrill clear note when she blew on it. The little boy left his step and nestled up close to her side. He looked up at her with beautiful dark eyes, not in the least afraid.

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[2] *The fountain.* At the foot of the steep hill upon which Nazareth was built was a great spring or fountain of clear cold water to which all the people came except those who had cisterns in their courtyards. It sprang from the hills. It never failed even through the long dry summer. The overflow from the fountain made a stream in which the women and girls washed their clothes.

[3] *Flute or pipe.* These were made of reed or stone and were used by shepherds to call the sheep, and to make music for dancing. See Genesis 4:21. Job 21:11, 12.

"Let me blow it," he said.

The tall girl drew him close to her and holding him in the curve of her arm said, "Place it against your lips so. Now blow. Blow hard." The little boy puffed out his lips and blew hard. A tiny shrill call came from the pipe.

"Good! Good!" cried the tall girl, laughing and clapping her hands. "You will soon be able to go out with Jacob to guard the flocks. No bear would dare come near your sheep. But tell me. Where did you come from? We were here all night, my sister Dinah and I. Very early we ran down to the fountain for water and when we came back, here you were. Did the angels drop you from their arms as they flew back to heaven after guarding their own through the dark night?"[4]

"I came with my father and mother when it was very dark," said the little boy gravely. "I think I was asleep. My name is Joshua."

"We must have been asleep too," cried the tall girl, "and so missed your coming. I am Ruth and this is my sister, Dinah. When we have brought the water from the fountain we grind the corn for the bread.[5] Would you like to help us? First we go to the pit and get

---

[4] *Angel Guardians.* "He shall give his angels charge over thee. They shall keep thee in all thy ways." Psalm 91:11, 12.

[5] *Corn.* This means grain in general, wheat, barley and rye, but not our maize or Indian corn. See John 12:24.

a basket full of corn. Then we sit on the ground by the grinding stones. I sit on one side and push the handle while Dinah sits on the other side and pulls it back. You may drop the grains of corn through this hole. The stones crush the grain into meal.[6] Then our mother will mix the meal with water and leaven,[7] and take it to the oven and bake it into bread.[8] You shall have a cake of the fresh bread. See, this is the way and this is the song of the grinding.
Eeee! Ooooh! Just so.
Eeee! Ooooh! The slow stones go."

"Eeee! Ooooh!" sang the little boy happily as he dropped the grains into the hole. Ruth pushed and Dinah pulled and slowly, very slowly, a tiny mound of white meal fell from between the stones. "It is great fun," he cried. "I do hope the bread will be baked very soon."

Things To Find Out.

1. Find out some of the differences between such a house as father Joseph's kinsman lived in and your own

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[6] *Grinding corn.* The corn was ground into flour by means of grinding stones. These were called upper and nether millstones. The upper stone had a round hole in the center through which the grain was poured. It had also a handle or lever by which it was turned against the nether stone. It took two persons to grind.

[7] *Leaven.* Leaven corresponds to our yeast. A bit of leavened dough was kept from the last baking and added to the fresh mixture.

[8] *Ovens.* The same oven was used by several families. It was usually set up in a small separate house or hut. It consisted of a cylinder of baked earth two feet in diameter and an inch and a half thick. It was closed by a cover of clay in which a stone had been embedded for a handle. It had no bottom but the earth. The ground inside the oven was covered with a flat disk on which the thin loaves were placed. Sometimes the loaves were plastered over the outside of the cylinder. Grass was used for fuel. Matthew 6:30 and Luke 12:28.

home. Why did they build low houses around courtyards and shut and guard their gates? What were some of the dangers they feared? What do we fear? Were their living rooms sunny and healthful with plenty of fresh air and pure water? What conveniences for cooking and washing and bathing did they have?

Suppose we had to grind our grain by hand, cook over an open fire or on hot stones, or that we had no flues to carry the smoke from our fires out of our houses, how would our lives be affected?

Would you think that the men who have invented new and better means of living have rendered Christian service to the world?

Do you know or can you find out something about such men? Who invented our modern mills for grinding flour? When was the first chimney used?

When Jesus became a man he found many, many blind people. Did the dark, smoky, illy-ventilated homes have anything to do with this condition?

When we observe the rules of health are we serving God?

Things To Do.

1. Make of blocks or cardboard a house and courtyard such as are described in this story.
2. Grind some wheat or corn in a coffee mill or pound it with stones to see what kind of flour you can make. Mix some of this flour with water, spread it very thin and bake it. Is it good?
3. Visit a flour mill and notice the machinery that grinds the wheat. Learn if you can the names of some

inventors of grinding machinery. Did these inventors serve others in a Christian way?

4. Make a whistle or pipe out of a willow stick. How many different calls can you give on it?

5. Make a little play out of this story and act it.

6. Set the little grinding song to music and sing it.

His Own Home

THE little boy could never remember clearly either how they came to be living in their own home. Of securing a house to live in, of getting settled in it and of father Joseph's getting work as a carpenter to make a living for them, he had only a dim knowledge. What he did remember when he was only a little older was that they lived in a small one-roomed house[1] with a pleasant yard and roof; and that there was a fig tree in the courtyard that made a pleasant shade and gave sweet fruit for him to eat. But he remembered best of all his mother's dress.

---

[1] *One-roomed house.* The houses of the poorer people of Nazareth were often but one room. This was sometimes shared by the domestic animals, the goats, chickens and donkeys. The house was made of mud and thatched with straw or of stone without mortar and roofed with boughs on which straw and clay were laid to make it water-proof. People who could afford it mixed mortar of lime and sand and cemented their walls. When the house was shared with the domestic animals an extra floor was laid over part of the room from four to six feet higher than the ground. From the doorstone, steps ascended to this floor. The animals were sheltered under this floor. A flight of steps on the outside led to the flat roof which usually had a three-foot railing or balustrade about it for protection from falling off. The roof could be used for many purposes. It was sometimes the guest room for the village. It was an out-of-doors living and sleeping room in fair weather. It was a place for storing supplies and for drying flax or food. Inside the house would be grain and food bins, and large stone jars for water and oil. There would be almost always a painted chest for holding small valuables such as ornaments, a manuscript or keepsakes of various kinds. Beds were made of skins and mats and were folded and put away during the daytime, and taken out and spread on the floor at night. There would be a brazier or iron pot to hold fire and perhaps two or three three-legged stools for chairs. Other furnishings would be a set of grinding stones, baskets, jars, bowls, and perhaps a loom. It was in some such home as this that Jesus spent those first most impressionable years of his life.

The dress was of dark blue. It fell in long straight lines to the ground when she stood, but when she sat on the floor or on the low three-cornered stool it lay around her in soft folds. The little boy, Joshua, loved to have her sit down for it was then that he could creep close to her and hear most clearly all that was being said. It was not often that she lifted him in her warm strong arms and held him close to her, for there was another baby come to take that place. But that did not trouble him. There was love enough in her soft dark eyes and tender lips and hands for all the babies in the world, so the little boy thought. Besides, the baby, though he was now so soft and sleepy, would grow up and become a strong brave playfellow. He could wait. A little brother [2] was worth waiting for.

Though Joshua was often almost hidden in his mother's skirts, he was like a little chicken who creeps under its mother's wings yet peeps out with curious bright eyes to see what is going on in the world. What he saw and heard there in his little home made a deep impression on his mind. An impression, so deep, that it entered into his nature and made him what he was in later years.

The little home room was dark except for the light that came through one low doorway. All through the long bright days the door stood open letting in the sunshine, the air and the voices and sounds of the street but at night it was closed. Mats were spread on the floor, and his father and his mother, his little brother and he lay down to sleep. A tiny lamp made of a wick of flax laid in oil burned softly all night from its niche in the wall.[3] He felt safe and peaceful like a small brown lamb close to its mother in the fold. When morning came his father opened the door and he could see the white and blue doves in the grapevines and the brown goats, Be Be and Muh, waiting to be milked. He would have a cup of the warm sweet milk for his breakfast.[4]

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[2] *A brother*. The little brother was James. Jesus had four brothers, and at least two sisters. (Authorities differ. The persons referred to as his brothers in the gospels may have been his cousins.) See Matthew 13:55, 6.

But, though Joshua could never see anyone else in the small dark room, he was very, very sure that there must be another presence, for every morning and every evening, before every meal, however simple, his father and his mother knelt and with bowed heads and folded hands talked to someone.[5] Whoever it was never seemed to answer and yet his father and mother seemed happy and satisfied after they talked in that manner.

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[3] *A lamp.* A lamp was kept burning all night. This would be a small clay saucer-shaped bowl with a lip. It was filled with oil, either olive or animal fat. A flax wick was laid in the oil and over the lip. There were many shapes for lamps.

[4] *Goats.* The goat was the animal in common use both because it was smaller and cheaper than the cow or the camel, and because it could subsist on less food. It was an exceedingly useful animal. Its milk was drunk by children. Out of its milk, cheese, butter, and leben were made. The flesh of the goat was eaten and its skin was made into bottles for wine or water, and used also for rugs, coats and tents. The goat was sometimes sacrificed to God as a sin offering. It figured in an elaborate religious rite as a scapegoat.

[5] *Prayer.* The devout Jew began and ended the day with prayer. The evening prayer was called the Shema. It was made up of the passages from the Bible found in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41. Several very beautiful benedictions were in common use. See Numbers 6:24-6.

When he talked in this way father Joseph's voice was deep and low and earnest with just a little fear and pleading in it. The little listening boy did not quite understand the meaning of the words, but they made him feel sorry and glad all at once. To this One his father told all their troubles. It seemed to little Joshua that there had been many troubles. There was something his father could not do and he was asking for help. How queer it seemed that his great strong father with his brown hands and sturdy body should have to beg for help. Surely he could draw the straightest, truest, thinnest shaving from a piece of lumber of any man in the world. Did he not make the best yokes for oxen, the finest saddles and wheels of any man in Nazareth? Did he not go everywhere to help people build their houses, to make their doors, and chests, and stools? Every one trusted him. Did he not carry silver coins in his purse in his girdle? Why should his father ask so humbly for help?

And yet it seemed there was great need. Something was not as it should be. In father Joseph's deep voice as he spoke to this other presence there was a thrill that sent the shivers up and down the little boy's back. It made him tingling warm but it frightened him too.

"God of our fathers!" father Joseph spoke in his earnest clear voice. "Thou hast been our help in ages past. Be thou our help today. Lead thou us through the dark waters of life as thou ledst our fathers through the dark waters of the sea to a fair land. Guide us, O thou great Jehovah." And at the end he would say, and expect mother and the little boy and even the baby brother to try to say, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might."

"Who is God of our fathers?" Joshua whispered to his mother when the prayer was ended and the hum of father Joseph's saw could be heard as his strong arms drove it through the white wood in the tiny shop close to the house,[6] "Mother, who is God? I can't see Him. Is He in this room?"

Then his mother, laying aside the brown bowl in which she had begun to mix meal and water for bread, drew him to her knees, for little brother was still asleep and could not need her, and told him this story.

"When we say, 'God of our fathers,' little son, it means that we are speaking to a strong, wise, loving power, not a man as is your father Joseph, or as you will be, but something much greater, wiser, and more powerful. It is this something we call God, who has made the earth so good and beautiful, who made us also, and who keeps us safe from harm. We speak to this good power for we believe He hears us and loves us."

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[6] *The carpenter's shop.* The Jewish law required that every boy be taught a trade. The trade of the father was usually handed down to the son. Jesus is said to have been a carpenter. Paul was a tent maker. The shop would be near the home. It probably formed the front of the house, and would be directly on the street.

"I should like to see Him," said the little boy earnestly.

"You can see Him in the warm sunshine as it falls there on the pathway, and in the gentleness of the doves as they coo there in the nests over their little ones. God is in beauty. See how their colors glow and change in the light. See how they arch their soft necks and step softly with their rosy feet. You may not see God but you can understand Him when you feel love." "See," mother went on, "I hold you in my arms and kiss you. It is God speaking, not in words but in love. Love me, little son."

When she said this, Joshua threw his arms about her neck and hugged her hard. As he did so he felt very happy. His dark eyes sparkled. He threw back his curly dark head and laughed out loud. A small tingling thrill went from his warm arms down to his bare brown toes.

"There," said his mother, "God is like that."

"I love God," said Joshua seriously. "But I do wish I could see Him."

"It is enough to feel love and know it is God,"[7] said mother. "As you grow into a man, father Joseph will teach you a prayer which you can say for yourself. But run now and gather grass to heat the oven for the baking or there will be no bread, and remember always to serve God by being loving."

---

[7] *God as Love.* The idea of God as Love was not universal but was beginning to be understood by individuals. The mother of Jesus might reasonably be supposed to have had such a concept of God.

Things To Find Out.

1. Read the note about the one-roomed house, Number 1 on page 14, and tell all you know about how the people slept, ate and worked in Jesus' time.

2. What would Be Be and Muh be like? Why didn't they have a cow to give milk as we do? What did they do with the goat's milk besides drink it? What other uses were made of the goat?

3. Find Leviticus, sixteenth chapter. Read about the scapegoat. Read the fifth, tenth, twenty-first and twenty-second verses.

4. What kind of a lamp would set in the niche in the wall? What kind of oil would it burn? What kind of a wick would it have?

5. Find the fourth chapter of John and read the twenty-fourth verse. Tell what Jesus believed about God when he was a man.

Things To Do.

1. Make a small house of cardboard or clay such as Jesus lived in. Make the yard with its fig tree, its pits for storing grain and its cistern and the carpenter's shop near by. Make the railing around the roof and furnish the roof as a guest room.

2. Commit to memory the fourth and fifth verses of the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. This was the creed of the Jewish people at that time. Compare it with some other modern creed, perhaps the Apostles' Creed.

3. What is a benediction? Read Numbers, chapter

six, verses twenty-four, -five and -six. Have you ever heard this? Memorize it.

4. Make some clay lamps. Fill one and light it. Does it make a good light?

Joshua Learns and Thinks More About God

IN another year the baby, James, was walking everywhere and Joshua had to watch him because he was just as likely to fall down as he was to stand. Their home was built on the slope of a great hill.[1] There was scarcely a level spot in the whole place. Joshua dug his strong brown toes into the earth to keep him from falling when he ran and tried to teach little James to do it. There was nothing he would not do for James to make him happy or to keep him safe from harm. They played together with blocks of wood, building houses and shops and synagogues. Be Be and Muh, the brown goats, that gave such sweet rich milk, lived in the yard in the summertime or were taken to the fields to graze during the day, by the shepherds who cared for many sheep and goats. Be Be had two small brown babies as like her as possible but cunning and playful. A stone bench stood by the door on which the children sometimes played or lay down for a nap in the heat of the day. The grape vines and an old, old fig tree made a shade over the yard and the stone bench. Chickens scratched in the dusty pathway and a lean brown dog came and lay in the shade and begged for scraps of bread.[2]

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[1] *A great hill.* Palestine, the country where Joshua was born, is broken throughout into great hills and valleys. There is very little fertile land on the hills except where walls of stone, made by the people, hold it into small levels or terraces.

Mother moved in and out, busy at cooking or spinning or weaving or sewing[3] but always happily singing some old song or smiling at the two little boys. Father Joseph's carpenter shop[4] stood just by the gate in the wall and some one was always going in or out with a bit of work for him. The sound of their voices made a pleasant hum except when the saw and the hammer[5] made too much noise.

There couldn't have been a pleasanter place to live in all the world, little Joshua thought. The world to him was down the hill to the fountain where all the women went with their tall brown jars for water; the market-place[6] where all the people gathered to buy food, and gossip and listen to stories; the dim old synagogue where he was taken to worship God; the gray rocky trail of a road[7] that came from far away and went on and on, beaten into dust by the hooves of donkeys and the pads of tall brown camels; the great snow-capped mountain[8] that could be seen from the crest of the hill, and the close silver stars and moon that came when the sun had dropped into the sea.[9] And always and always there was a sense of that Presence that good power to which they spoke continually and which Joshua felt in his heart like a sweet stinging joy; about which he hoped to learn more and more as he grew older.

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[2] *Dogs.* Dogs, except when they were but puppies, were not petted and cared for as we care for them, but were neglected and half starved. Even today, in the streets of the eastern cities they are a pitiful sight, lazy, mangy and half starved.

[3] *Busy.* Contrary to general thought, primitive people such as these, worked very hard. They carried on a constant hand to hand struggle with poor, heavy, dull tools. They lived very simply and had little food compared to people of today.

[4] *Carpenter.* The lumber used by a carpenter of father Joseph's time was secured from many kinds of trees. The cedar, cypress and fir grew in great abundance.

[5] *Carpenter's tools.* A carpenter of this time would have saws made of flint, or of very thin and flexible strips of metal set in wood; chisels made of bronze and iron; and awls, axes, adzes, files, hammers and nails. All of these have been found in Palestine by explorers.

[6] *Market-place.* The market-place was usually just inside the city's gate. It was a wide open space from which the streets diverged. To it the farmers brought their produce. It was a common meeting-place. Children played there. News was exchanged there. The travelling story-teller sat there and entertained the people. There was usually a market street as well as a place.

He thought about it a great deal but he didn't talk about it much to anyone. He was a quiet, thoughtfu little boy with clear, deep, dark eyes under heavy, dark straight, brows, a clear dark skin and the pleasantest smile that showed white teeth. He was slender and strong, but not very tall. He wore a blue tunic tied at the waist with a leather girdle which Julius, the tanner,[10] had given him on his fifth birthday. He had another tunic, a white woolen one which his mother had woven for him out of wool they had from their sheep,[11] but this he wore only on the Sabbath or other feast days. He had some sandals too, and a cloth to wear on his head but usually he went bareheaded and barefooted for it was too warm to wear many clothes, and they were too poor to buy many fine things even if they needed them.

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[7] *Trail or Road.* Authorities differ as to there being a main-travelled road through Nazareth. Recent explorations have revealed traces of three caravan roads presumably built by the Romans or at least widened and improved by them. One of these ran from Sidon southward near the coast to Tyre, through Joppa to Gaza. Another ran from Damascus to Hyppos southeast of the sea of Galilee southward to Bethel, Ramah and Jerusalem and on to Bethlehem and Hebron; while another ran from Damascus to Ptolemais on the coast This might have run through Nazareth.

The roads that the child Jesus knew were little more than narrow rocky, winding paths. Over them travelled single beasts of burden the donkey, the camel, the ox, and man walking or riding on one of these. One of these trails might and often did run through the cultivated fields. They were, of course, unfenced.

[8] *Mountain.* Mt. Hermon well to the north of Nazareth remains snow-capped throughout the year.

[9] *The sea.* This was the Mediterranean sea. It could be seen from the heights above Nazareth.

But being poor didn't trouble Joshua. He was sure there could be no better place, full as it was of laughter and play and song and work,[12] and that Presence his father trusted in and spoke to so lovingly; that Presence which his mother told him was like the tenderness he felt in his heart for her and the others; for Dochi and Be Be and the doves and the brown dog; for sunshine and beauty; the winding rough, gray, trail that came from and went into the hidden hills; the splendid stars over the mountain top and the red warm sun that dropped every day into the sea and returned every morning. Joshua did not even know that they were poor.

On the side of the house next to the road, father

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[10] *Tanner.* Leather was made from the skins of animals as were also ottles and clothing. Tanneries were maintained outside the towns and ities that the odors might not cause unsanitary conditions.

[11] *Wool and weaving.* See page 182 for a description of the festival f sheep-shearing. Spinning by hand and weaving on very simple ooms went on continually. The women did this work. Flax also was ultivated and linen cloth was woven.

[12] *Laughter and song.* Contrary to the general idea, these people vere happy and light-hearted; a singing, dancing, feasting people. esus, himself, loved company, went to feasts, dinners, weddings; vore good clothes, loved little children and simple good times with is friends.

Joseph had built a flight of steps that led to the flat roof. Mother had woven a rug and spread it on the floor. She had carried some earth in a jar and planted some vines and flowers to make it pretty and brought some mats to sit on. Here on summer evenings they often came to sit because it was cooler and quieter here than on the ground. Sometimes they slept here. It was a lovely, quiet, hidden place and Joshua loved quiet and loneliness. It was easier to dream dreams here than where everyone was talking and working. Then, too, his father and mother often told him stories here;[13] stories of brave men who lived long ago; of how the world came to be; of kings and queens and princes and of wonderful brave deeds that still needed to be done in the world, that a boy might hope to do.

It was hard for Joshua to decide which of these he liked best but perhaps he asked oftenest just at first for the one about Abram. It began, "Away back in the misty times before all men were alike or knew about God" . . . Joshua shivered just to think of the hidden, mysterious times so long ago when they still searched for God and because they needed to see in order to believe, made clay or stone or silver or gold figures, sometimes very ugly, and called them Gods and prayed to them. There had been an old man named Terah[14] who made these small figures called idols,[15] and sold them to all who cared to buy. This old man had had a little son called Abram who watched him make idols. One day when the small son had watched a very queer apelike figure being finished he said, "Father, can the idol hear what is said to it?"

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[13] *Professional story-tellers.* Much of the education of the times was through story-telling. Tradition, or the passing on by word of mouth from father to son constituted many times the whole of a child's education. There were some formal schools but only a small part of the children were sent to these. Professional story-tellers went from place to place with a common stock of stories, songs and poems to which the people listened eagerly.

[14] *Terah, the father of Abram.* See Genesis, 11:31-2.

Terah looked puzzled and a little frightened, for all the grown-up people had agreed among themselves, without saying very much about it, to believe that the small figures had great power over men's lives, and it was understood that no one must question or say he did not believe, otherwise something dreadful might happen. Only a little innocent child like Abram might ask such a question and even he should quickly be taught better.

So Terah said quite sternly to his boy, "There are powers about us we cannot understand. Some are good powers but some are very bad. Sometimes the good powers send us good harvests, large flocks, and plenty of fruit. Then men are well and strong and unafraid. But sometimes we have terrible floods, our food is destroyed. Or sometimes we have drouth and famine and many people die. That is because the bad powers are working against us. What we have to do is to please the good powers so that they will always work for us. So we worship them and give them gifts and set their images up in our homes. This small image here is the god of the Sun[16] without whom we could not live. We hope the Sun spirit will come to live in this body and accept our gifts and grant our prayers and be our God. Pray to him, my son, for he has power over your life."

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[15] *Idols.* Figures of wood and stone made to represent a god and worshipppd in place of the god. The Jewish people were forbidden by their law to make any likeness of any living thing, to bow down themselves and worship it. See Genesis 5:8.

But Abram only looked at the small image in silence. He could not say all that he felt but he was not at all sure that he believed that his father was right, nor at all sure that the idol had power over him to affect his life. But he thought to himself, because he saw that his father believed so thoroughly in the idol that to speak his thought aloud would give him pain and make him angry, "There must be a real power of goodness which can be understood. I am going to search for a better God than these my father tells about. I shall travel far and long to find him, and when I have found him I shall worship him and teach others to love him as I do."

"And that is what Abram did," mother went on. "He sought God, the spirit of love and goodness."

"Did he find God, mother?"

"He was the first man who ever doubted the old idols of wood and stone, and set out on a long brave search for better things. But, though he did learn some truth, he did not learn all that we would like to know. There is still much to learn and to do before men know God. There is still need for brave courageous teaching to right wrongs and help men to know the best and highest ways of living."

"I can see, mother, how it might be very exciting and interesting to try to do that but why would it be brave?"

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[16] *God of the Sun.* Shamash was the name of the Sun god.

"It would be brave, little son, because men fear, above all things, the unknown. What they think they know, or at least what they have always accepted as truth, seems to them to be safe and proven but they fear any idea or person who wishes to change things. What they fear they resist by fair means or in secret cowardly ways."

The little boy was silent, not quite knowing how to say what was in his mind and heart, without seeming to boast. Even then he knew that no really brave person boasts of what he intends to do.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find some pictures of terraced land. What people of today have to terrace their land? Why is it done? How is it done? Is it easy to cultivate?

2. What are some of the differences that good roads make in the lives of people? Who have been great road builders?

3. Find out something about weaving as it is done today. How does it differ from the way it was done in Palestine when Jesus was a child?

4. Find out by asking or reading if there are any people in the world today who worship idols. Have you ever seen an idol?

Things To Do.

1. Ask some one you think might know or look in a geography or encyclopedia and read about some

countries that have a dry season and a rainy season. The Philippine Islands have such a climate. See if you can think of some differences this might make in the people, the crops, and the ways of farming.

2. Add to the small model you have made of Jesus' home a shop such as father Joseph must have had. Make the courtyard with the grape vines, the old fig tree and the stone bench that stood by the door. Make Dochi and Be Be and Muh and the baby goats. Make the little house for the oven and make the oven inside it. Make some people to represent the members of the family.

3. Learn that part of the Jewish law which you will find in Genesis sixth chapter and eighth verse.

The Sabbath Day

THE going down of the sun on the evening of the sixth day of the week marked the beginning of the Sabbath[1] when mother lighted the Sabbath lamp.[2] From his low stool the little boy, Joshua, watched her. The lamp was of stone but larger than the lamp that burned every night in its niche in the wall. With careful hands mother lifted it from its place and filled it with oil fresh from the brown jar. Then, placing the tiny wick against the fire in the brazier until it glowed

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[1] *The Sabbath.* Read Genesis 2:2, 3 and Exodus 20:8-11 for an explanation of the source of the Sabbath day. The Jewish Sabbath began with the going down of the sun on the sixth day of the week and continued until sunset of the following day. It was for the Jews a day of rest and gladness; a day of special worship and feasting. That they observed one day in seven as a day of rest marked them as peculiar among other people. Other people, not Jews, thought it strange and rather foolish to spend every seventh day in such fashion. But to the Jews, the day was so sacred that rather than disobey their law to do no work on the Sabbath, thousands of them at one time refused to fight on the Sabbath and so were utterly destroyed by their enemies. But in their efforts to obey the law and "do no work" they made some rather unnecessary and sometimes burdensome and unreasonable rules. They described thirty-nine different kinds of work which a man might *not* do on the Sabbath. Among these were plowing, sowing, reaping, baking, weaving, the tying or untying of knots, and the writing of letters. When Jesus was a man he passed through a cornfield on the Sabbath and broke and ate some of the grain. Because of this they accused him of breaking the Sabbath. For, they said, plucking the grain was reaping, and rubbing the grains from the husks was threshing. In the book of Matthew 12:1-8, and the book of Luke 6:1-5 may be found a record of this, together with Jesus' reply to his accusers.

[2] *The Sabbath Lamp.* This is not the same as the lamp that burned all night but a special lamp that had a peculiar religious significance as a symbol of God's presence.

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red, she laid one end within the oil and the other across the lamp's lip and returned it to its place where it glowed with a clear steady light. What did it matter if outside the deep darkness came and all the friendly daytime playfellows were quietly asleep? To Joshua there was something wonderfully strange and interesting about the Sabbath lamp. His mother always whispered the same words as she lighted it.

> "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of
> the Universe,
> Who hast sanctified us by thy commandments
> And commanded us to light the Sabbath lamp."

Was God in the lamp, he wondered. No, mother had said that God was like the love he felt in his heart. But the light and the feeling of love seemed somehow to mean almost the same. How steadily it burned and what queer long shadows it threw across the floor. The little boy, all washed and dressed in his Sabbath clothes, watched the light and his mother, who moved about in her long blue dress getting the food ready for the meal[3] they would eat after they had been to the synagogue to hear the evening prayers. First, she brought out two crisp brown loaves of bread and placed them in a basket. Then she filled a bottle with wine which they had made from the grapes which grew on their own vines. It smelled very good and Joshua wished his father would come soon and wash, for before they ate they must walk a little way down the hill to the synagogue[4] where kneeling together they would repeat,

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[3] *The Sabbath Meal.* The two loaves provided for the Sabbath meal commemorated the double portion of manna in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:14 and Numbers 11:7.) The ceremony over the bread and wine which the father or head of the family conducted at the meal was one of sanctification. The wine was blessed and drunk from one cup in turn by each member of the family. The ceremony of hand washing followed and after this the bread was broken. A benediction was repeated and the bread was divided among the company. The Sabbath meal was like the Christian communion service.

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of
the Universe
Who hast sanctified us by thy commandments, and wast pleased with us,
And hast given us for a heritage in love and
favor
Thy holy Sabbath, a memorial of the work of
creation."

Then home again to sit quietly while father Joseph broke the bread and gave each one a piece and filled the bowls with wine which they drank together. Then to long dreamless sleep cuddled close to father Joseph while the little night lamp burned lower and lower. Surely God's love guarded the little boy.

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[4] *The Synagogue.* A synagogue was maintained in every Jewish community where there were ten or more men who could support it. The worship of the synagogue was quite distinct from that which went on in the Temple at Jerusalem since no sacrifices were offered in the Synagogues. The building itself was like our simpler churches. It was usually made of stone, longer than it was wide and divided into three or five aisles by rows of columns. At the end opposite the entrance was a raised platform on which was placed the chest or ark that held the scroll of the law and other sacred writings. These were enclosed in cases of embroidered cloth or carved leather or ornamented silver or gold. In front of the ark a lamp was kept constantly burning. Sometimes a chair and a desk or table stood on the platform. The chief seats were placed in front of the platform. They were occupied by the elders and leading men and were so placed that they faced the audience. The audience of men and boys sat on benches or on mats on the floor. The women and girls did not sit with the men but occupied seats at either side behind a lattice. The service consisted of prayers, Scripture reading from the books of the law and from the books of the prophets, and singing. The songs were Psalms set to music. The synagogue was also the school house. It was also the court house where the local Sanhedrin held trials.

As soon as he was awake on the Sabbath morning they must go once more to the synagogue. Now it was bright sunshine out-of-doors. The birds were singing and all the world seemed very glad as they walked along. Just at first it seemed very dark and gloomy inside for their eyes were used to the brightness, but soon the quiet and peace of the dim old place filled their hearts. In a few moments Joshua could see where mother was sitting among the other women on the other side of the room behind a lattice-like screen. Just why he could not sit with her the little boy often wondered. But it was enough that they were all together and that Rabbi ben Ezra's kind old voice repeated the morning prayers.

On week days Rabbi ben Ezra was the school master and wore a brown tunic with a girdle that had no tassels. On the Sabbath he wore a white robe with a blue border and his girdle had blue tassels but the kind eyes above the brown tunic or the white robe were the same, and the quiet voice, always a little mysterious and far away, was the very same. The light from the ever burning lamp before the ark that held the scroll of the law and the prophets,[5] shone on his gray hair and on his white old hands. In the chief seats sat the elders facing the men and boys of the audience. Reverently the ark was opened. Reverently the scroll was handed to Rabbi ben Ezra.

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[5] *The Scroll of the Law.* The Pentateuch or the first five books of the Old Testament are the books of the law. A scroll of the law might be one of these books. It would be a copy of the original which is supposed to have been written by Moses. The copies in use in Jesus' time were made in Hebrew by Jewish scholars called Scribes.

It was not from the words of the law [6] that the Rabbi read but from some writer [7] little Joshua had never heard. But the words were beautiful. He listened eagerly.

"Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters. He that hath no money, come ye buy and drink."

The little boy knew what it was to be thirsty. He knew what it was like when no rain had fallen for months and the land was thirsty. "Incline your ear and come unto me. Hear and your soul shall live," the kind old voice went on and on.

They were written by hand on parchment or Egyptian paper or papyrus, and were very expensive. Each synagogue had a copy and some of the richer or better educated people had copies. It is said that Jesus' parents probably had a full copy of the Scriptures. (Sketches of Jewish Life. Page 118. Edersheim.) The written parchment or scroll was wrapped about a rod of metal or wood, and enclosed in a carved silver or gold or embroidered leather or cloth case. The reading of the scroll was a sacred part of the synagogue service. When the reader had finished the scroll was returned to the ark and the reader proceeded to comment or interpret what he had read. See Luke 4:16-21.

[6] *The words of the law.* The law which was contained in the first five books of the Old Testament was divided into sections and one section was read each Sabbath. The law was always read but a portion of prophecy might also be read and commented upon.

[7] *The writer.* These words are quoted from the words of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 55. Isaiah was a prophet, a statesman, an historian, and a poet of the highest order. He was a counsellor of two kings at Jerusalem, King Ahaz and King Hezekiah. He began to write about the year 760 B.C. He was the first of the Jewish leaders of thought to formulate a philosophy of history. He taught that all events are subordinated to the working out of a single sublime plan. God has this plan and men are helpers in the working out of the plan. He is considered the greatest of all the great prophets.

"Your soul shall live." The little boy's keen mind seized on this and tried to understand. Had it anything to do with the spirit of love and goodness which his mother had said was God?

Then suddenly he had a clear thought. He could not be sure just where it came from but it pleased him and his face, uplifted to the old teacher, glowed like another little lamp in the dark old synagogue.

"There is a way to understand God and that is by *being* good and loving, for goodness and love *are* God." That was the thought.

The little boy was to have many such clear thoughts about God. To him they seemed quite natural and matter-of-fact but to others, searching for truth in old books or seeking to understand by reason, the puzzling facts of life, they seemed miraculous.

Things To Find Out.

1. Ask your teacher or some other scholar, or look in an encyclopedia and read why our Sabbath is observed on the first day of the week instead of on the seventh as was the Sabbath of the Jews.
2. Find Luke 6:5 and read what Jesus said about the Sabbath.
3. When Jesus was a child they used in their worship services only the parts of the Bible known as the law and the prophets. Why was this? Find in the Bible the five books of the law. How many of the Jewish laws can you repeat?
4. What was the name of the great Hebrew lawgiver?

5. Find in the Bible the books of the prophets. Name some of the prophets. Which one wrote the words that Rabbi ben Ezra read?

6. See if you can make poetry out of the verses of the 55th chapter of Isaiah. Write some of the other verses in poetical form like this.

> "Ho, every one that thirsteth
> Come ye to the waters.
> He that hath no money
> Come ye buy and eat.
> Buy wine and milk without money
> Buy wine and milk without price."

Jesus was familiar with these words for they were used by the water carriers in the streets.

7. See if you can set these words to music and sing them.

Things To Do.

1. Make a synagogue such as is described in the story and place it near the house and carpenter's shop you have already made.

2. Make a scroll and an ark or chest for the synagogue.

3. Find the book of Isaiah and read the entire 55th chapter.

4. Try writing some of the verses as poetry. Try to sing some of them.

When I Am a Man

THE small carpenter's shop in which father Joseph and Joshua worked opened directly upon the narrow rough market-street of the town.[1] There was no front door, no front wall even, so it was easy to see all that went on in the street.

Another small shop was directly across the street from father Joseph's shop and from his own place Joshua could see and hear all that went on. The merchant in the shop opposite sat cross-legged behind his low counter and sold his goods to whomever came to buy. Sometimes they quarrelled loudly and fiercely over prices and called each other vile names.[2] It seemed as though they might kill each other, they grew so angry. But usually when the fierce quarrelling was ended the little boy saw the merchant slip a coin[3] into his purse with a cunning satisfied smile as though the bluster and anger had been but part of a game.

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[1] *The Street.* The main street was a continuation of the market-place and was really a part of it. It was very narrow and, in Nazareth, was very steep. It was darkened by the overhanging windows of the buildings, crowded by the heavily laden donkeys; the people intent on buying and selling; the children at their play; the beggars and peddlers, and stray dogs and goats. The shops that lined it on either side were open like booths. The shopkeeper squatted among his goods with his feet tucked under him. He did almost all his work sitting. The street was narrow, dirty, rough and foul with a variety of bad smells.

[2] *Bargaining.* The Oriental merchant seldom or never has a fixed price for his merchandise, but names first a price far in excess of what he expects to receive. The buyer likewise names a sum as one he is willing to pay, lower than he really will pay in the end to secure a desired article. There is always a chance then to bargain. Buying and selling becomes a trial of wits. The merchant who can get twice the value of his article from a purchaser is not considered dishonest but very clever and able. The purchaser who pays more than an article is worth is not pitied or considered wronged but is laughed at contemptuously as an ignorant person who has gotten only what he deserved.

The steep, narrow, dark, rough, illy-smelling little street of Nazareth was full of the shrill angry cries of the merchants and their customers; the clatter of the small hooves of the donkeys; the call of the water seller[4] as he passed with his jar or skin of cool water from the fountain below; the voices of the blind beggars[5] as they sat by the street and of the tap, tap of the crutches of the cripples[6] who hobbled by, whining and begging. Lean, mangy, half-starved dogs slept in the sunshine or fought over the scraps of refuse thrown from the houses. Flies swarmed everywhere, over the food for sale, on the mangy dogs and in the children's eyes and no amount of shooing could drive them away. This was the market-street. At its lower end was an open space where goods were unloaded and distributed. At its crest was a steep precipice over which criminals were thrown. All in between the open market-place and the steep precipice lay the small low houses of the people and between the houses ran the narrow, dark, rough lane-like side streets.

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[3] *Coins.* In early Hebrew times gold and silver were not coined but weighed. See Genesis 23:16. But in the times of the Romans many coins were in circulation. Both gold and silver coins were in use. The gold shekel was worth about nine dollars and sixty cents in our money but the silver shekel was worth only about sixty-four cents. The mahneh or Mina in gold was worth fifty shekels or four hundred and eighty dollars of our money, while the talent was a fortune in itself, being in gold, sixty mahnehs or twenty-eight thousand eight hundred dollars. In silver, the talent was worth only about one thousand nine hundred and twenty dollars. There were, however, many small coins of trifling value. These bore various inscriptions and approximated the circle in shape.

[4] *The Water Sellers.* Water from various sources was peddled about the streets in skin or earthen jars and sold in individual drinks. The people were quite expert in telling by taste just where the water came from. One of the cries of the water carriers was the passage from Isaiah (chapter 55) quoted on page 37.

[5] *Blind Beggars.* Blindness was extremely common in Nazareth as it still is in most Oriental cities. It is due in large measure to unsanitary conditions, to filth and the swarming flies which settle thick on the eyes of the helpless babies. Jesus had always a pitiful heart for the blind.

[6] *Cripples.* The people of Palestine at this time knew little surgery so that with disease unchecked, warfare almost a continuous performance, and the custom of torture as punishment for crime, cripples were the commonest kind of a sight and excited little or no attention.

From his place in father Joseph's shop the little boy watched life going on about him. In his heart was a great pity and understanding. He knew all the blind beggars and the cripples and spoke kindly to them for he loved people and understood them. For the little children he felt a great tenderness and for all the sick and helpless ones he had only pity.

Out beyond the noisy street were the wide green hills of the country,[7] beautiful and full of a still peace. Flowers grew there, tall red and yellow lilies, many colored poppies and mustard as tall as small trees. In the fields grew golden grain, wheat and rye and millet. Birds sang in the fruit trees. Wild beasts hid in the caves.[8] Trees grew on the hillsides and bloomed, and bore fruit, olives and figs and pomegranates. Sheep grazed over the valleys and a deep sweet silence lay over all. All these the little boy of the carpenter's shop with his tender heart and his wise thoughts knew and loved.

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[7] *The Country*. All of the people lived in the towns and cities and went out to cultivate the land, to graze the herds, to get fuel and to conduct such processes as tanning, mining, etc. This was for protection from wild beasts, from robbers, and from danger in times of war. Many of the towns had high walls about them.

[8] *Caves*. Palestine is full of caves, large and small, in the limestone rock. In early days these were the haunts of wild beasts, the lion,

Be Be and Muh and the two babies, grown now to be as tall as their mother, had to be taken every day to the pasture and guarded while they nibbled the green grass. Shepherds[9] guarded them with other goats and sheep and brought them back to the folds at night. Sometimes the little boy went with the shepherd and spent the day among the hills and caves playing. It was on one of these times that he met John, and they came to be good friends. Lying flat on their backs in the shade of a great rock[10] they talked together about many things. Lying so, they could see, out over the wide valley shimmering in the heat of the sun, the great

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the bear, the hyena and others. They also served for hiding places. See 1st Kings 18:4, and 19:9. They served to retain the rainfall and were sometimes used as storage places for grain. They must have been ideal places for play or retreat if one wished to be alone. It is said that Jesus had some such private secret place where he went to pray and meditate.

[9] *Shepherds.* The main interest of the people was perhaps still in their flocks of sheep and goats, cattle and camels. The care of these flocks was largly given over to professional shepherds. These sometimes drove the flocks far afield in search of food guarding them night and day, or building folds for them by night. The folds might be temporary or permanent. If temporary, they were made of brush walls and guarded by at least one watcher. If permanent, they were made of stone walls and divided into compartments for differing kinds of animals. Once a year there was a sheep-shearing festival. Then these shepherds brought their flocks in to the owners. Domestic animals were kept nearer home and driven out to graze during the day.

[10] *Shade.* Where there were no trees the great rocks made a welcome shade. See Isaiah 32:2.

eagles floating and swaying over the tops of the hills beyond. Out there some place they knew these birds had their nests and cared for their young. Perhaps they talked oftenest about goats and sheep and how to care for them, of the things their fathers did and of what they were going to be and do when they were grown up.

John did not live in Nazareth but came from the village that lay beyond the next great hill, with his flock of goats. They could barely see the goats as they clambered over the rough ground and John had sometimes to run quickly to see if they were safe. But he always came panting back to talk more with Joshua, for, though he was older and taller than Joshua, he thought there was no one quite so interesting and wonderful.

"I know lots of things," he told himself. "I know how to throw stones from a sling. I can run faster than the wild hares, and I can follow a trail like a dog. I know how to find the honey the wild bees hide and all about caves and trails and hiding places in the hills. I'm not afraid of any wild beast, not even of the hyenas. And when I am a man I mean to be and do something different and better than other men but Joshua can do things I can't do. I like to hear him talk."

One day as they lay in this way in the shade and talked about many things John said, "Tell me more about the shepherd boy who came to be a king. Please do. I like your stories."

"They're not just made up stories," answered Joshua. "My mother tells them to me and she says they are all true. That they are the history of our people away back in the beginning of things."

"That's why I like them," said John. "I like to think of things that really happened. They make me think that perhaps something glorious might happen to us. Do you think it might?"

"My mother told me," said Joshua slowly, "the story of a boy, not much older than we, who was called in from the fields where he was guarding his father's flocks just as we are, to be anointed king over all Israel."[11]

"It must have been long, long ago and in a far away land," said John.

"It was a long time ago, that is true. But it was here in this country. Not far, perhaps, from these very hills. The boy's name was David. He was very fair with red gold hair and he was very brave. He killed a lion that had stolen one of his lambs, bare-handed with no help but that of his shepherd's club. He had seven brothers older than himself. The wise old man who was looking for a king for Israel looked them all over while David was still out in the fields, to see if any one of them would make a good king. But none of them would do and the old man, who was called Samuel, turned away from them and said to their father, "Haven't you another son?"

"Yes," answered the father. "I have one more son but he is only a boy."

"Where is he?" said Samuel.

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[11] *David the Shepherd.* See 1st Samuel 16:11-13.

"He is away in the fields watching the sheep. But you can't want him. He is such a child."

"Send for him," said Samuel. "I shall know when I see him whether or not he is fit to be a king."

So the father called a swift runner and sent him far, far into the fields to find David. The messenger came panting to David after his long run and said, "You are wanted at home. Go as quickly as you can."

But David said, "I cannot leave my sheep. Wild animals might catch them. I cannot go."

"I was told to stay and guard the sheep but you are to run quickly for none of your brothers have been chosen and you only remain."

"That is a strange message," said David. "But see you that you guard the sheep well. I go." And snatching his shepherd's staff and cloak David ran swiftly away over the hills towards his home.

They had waited patiently for him, the sad, wise, old man, Samuel, his brothers with proud disdainful looks and his father, eager and anxious that this, his last son should not disappoint them all. When David at last came, warm and panting, he took him by the hand and led him before Samuel and said, "This is my youngest son. I have no more to give for my country."

The old man looked earnestly at David and laid his trembling hands on his shining fair hair. "He is a lad fit to be a king. I am sent by Yahweh to search out a king for Israel. Kneel, David, that I may anoint you king."

Quite frightened and not knowing in the least what to say, David knelt and the old man, touching his brow with a sacred oil said, "Rise, David, King of Israel. Go and await my messenger for the time is not far distant when you shall serve your country as a great king should in obedience to Yahweh, the king of all."

After a little silence Joshua went on, "My mother says David became the greatest king of all for it was he who really made us into a nation and united all our people."

"There could be nothing more wonderful than to be chosen king," said John. "There's nothing half so wonderful left for boys to do."

Joshua sat looking far away towards snowy Mt. Hermon. Then he said slowly, "Rabbi ben Ezra says that we have need of a new leader and that our wise men long ago prophesied that some one would come from among our own people who would bring great good and happiness to all the world. When I am a man,"—he paused and was still for so long that John grew tired waiting and asked, "Well, when you are a man. What then?"

"I would like to be a great teacher. Who knows? Some boy now living might be the great one our wise men long for so earnestly."

"A king would have greater power and honor," John said. "Wouldn't you rather be the king?"

To this Joshua made no answer but lay quietly, his eyes full of dreams as though he saw visions; his face full of peace and beauty.

Things To Find Out.

1. See if you can think of a few good reasons why

the people should have crowded so closely together in the towns. Was it for safety? Was it for company? Did they enjoy talking and working together? Was it because it was cheaper to live in this way?

In our own country people often live alone in the wide open spaces. What are some conditions that make this possible? Why do we no longer build walls about our cities? Is it because we have guns and poison gas to defend us? Or is it because people are less quarrelsome?

2. Did Jesus, when he became the greatest of all teachers, have anything to say that would influence people to be fairer, kinder and more tolerant of each other? See Mark 12:30-31.

3. Which do you think is a more honorable way to do business, to have one fair price for all and maintain it or to get all you can for what you have to sell?

4. What are some of the changes that have taken place in practice that make our living conditions better today? What is a sewer? Why do we think the streets ought to be clean? What are germs? Is there danger to health in exposed garbage? Do you think it is Christian service to try to make our streets clean?

5. Jesus did become a great teacher. Can you find out the names of some others of the world's great teachers? Who was Paul? Plato? Origin? Martin Luther?

6. Can you think of two or three forces that make life very different from life in Jesus' time? What is our attitude towards education? Towards the care of the sick, the insane and the very poor?

Do we think as John did that it would be wonderful to be a king? What is our idea about government?

Find out more about these by questions, by reading and observation.

Things To Do.

1. You have made Jesus' home, the carpenter's shop and the synagogue. Now locate the market-place and the market-street. Outline the street and make some more small shops on either side of the street. Show the steep precipice at the crest of the hill.

2. Learn Leviticus 19:18 and Mark 12:30, 31.

3. Look about you and observe a street. Then write a story about what is being done to keep it clean. Who keeps it clean and why? Make your story short but true.

In the Garden and At School

THE little boy loved secret, quiet places and that is why Rabbi ben Ezra let him go after study hours were over each day to the garden back of the synagogue. In this garden were old, old olive trees with twisted trunks and limbs and gray green leaves that whispered together in the wind like children telling secrets to each other. There were tall white and yellow lilies that bloomed only at evening and perfumed the whole garden with their fragrance. There were fig trees and shaggy palms and down one side of the wall that enclosed the garden from the public street there grew an old grape vine which bore purple clusters of sweet grapes. There was a cistern[1] in the garden from which brown slave boys drew fresh water for the thirsty plants. Birds had their nests in the trees and vines, and sang there very early in the morning, and at evening.

Sometimes Rabbi ben Ezra brought all the school boys[2] to the garden where they sat cross-legged on the ground about him and repeated over and over the words of the law, and the poems and songs and wonderful tales of the history of their people that he read to them from the scrolls which were kept locked in the small ark that stood in the synagogue.

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[1] *Cisterns.* The cisterns were a source of water supply during the dry months. Sometimes they were dug and walled with stone. Sometimes they were merely pits that were in the stone. Water was drawn from them by means of skin buckets. Not every one had a cistern.

[2] *School boys.* In such an Oriental school the boys would sit cross-legged on the floor in a semi-circle facing the teacher and repeat their lessons aloud. Only boys were sent to these schools.

But no one loved the garden as Joshua loved it. No one so often crept there alone to think and enjoy its beauty.

Rabbi ben Ezra was old and stooped. His hair and his long beard were as white as wool, as white as the whitest mists that often hung over the hilltops, but his eyes were dark and glowing like two deep pools at evening. They shone sometimes with a strange light and when they glowed in that fashion his voice trembled and was deep and earnest.

On week days, when he was only the school-master,[3] he wore a brown robe that came down to the ground, and flapping sandals on his feet. Around his waist he wore a girdle into whose folds he thrust all sorts of things, his leather scrip or purse, his quill with which he made the curious letters of the Hebrew alphabet, his roll of paper on which were written certain words,[4]—all sorts of things went into Rabbi ben Ezra's girdle for it was pocket and desk and shelf to the old master. On his head he wore a close-fitting black skull cap from under which his long white hair fell over his shoulders. Usually he walked up and down humming softly to himself the words of some beautiful old song, stooping now and then to speak to some lad who needed help.

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[3] *The teacher.* The officer of the synagogue, or minister, was also the school teacher.

[4] *Papyrus.* The scroll of the law was written on papyrus or parchment by the scribes. Each synagogue had a full copy. A few homes also had copies. The papyrus was their only paper. It was made first in Egypt of the fiber of the papyrus plant which grew in great profusion on the banks of the river Nile, and also in Palestine on the

Sometimes he sat on a low stool and told them stories of far off times and places and brave heroes who had served their country well in times of danger. But most of all he loved to tell them of Yahweh, the one true God in all the world.

At such times a great peace came into Rabbi ben Ezra's face, and the little boys, who with Joshua gathered about him and listened and asked him questions, knew that it was very important to learn about Yahweh. They tried to remember all they were told and long after the wise old Rabbi had gone back to his pacing up and down with bent head, they sat rocking back and forth on their tucked-up legs repeating over and over in a loud buzz and hum of voices, all that they could remember.

This was school.[5] Sometimes it was in the garden but more often it was held in the dark old synagogue.

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shores of Lake Huleh and the Lake of Tiberias or Galilee. The papyrus plant grew in shallow water to a height of ten to eighteen feet. It had a moist pith and a plume-like crown. To prepare the paper the stem of the plant was first cut into long thin strips. These strips were laid on a flat surface and soaked with water. Another layer of strips was laid horizontally on top of the first and the whole pressed down to form a single sheet. It was then dried in the sun and made smoother by polishing. It was somewhat like our brown paper but more durable.

[5] *School.* Before a Jewish boy went to school he was taught the Shema. See Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. The books used in the schools up to the time the child was ten years of age were all the books of the Old Testament. Leviticus in the main for the law, the prophets for ideas of God and the future of the Jewish race, and the Psalms for songs and prayers. The purpose of the school in the words of the Rabbis was, "To keep children from all contact with vice; to train to gentleness even when bitterest wrong had been received; to show sin in its repulsiveness rather than to terrify by its consequences; to train to strict truthfulness and to avoid all that might lead to disagreeable or indelicate thoughts." Edersheim. Life and Times of Jesus. Page 231, 2.

Not all of the boys and none of the girls went to school, only the boys whose fathers and mothers sent them, and of these only a few learned to read and to write. But no boy went until he was six years old. Only Joshua who wanted to be a great teacher and loved school better than he did the noisy street, spent many hours there after the others had run away to play at games in the market-place. It was at such times that Rabbi ben Ezra told Joshua more of what the Jews hoped for when the great teacher should come. Sitting together in the garden one warm evening while the darkness gathered about them he told this story.

"For a thousand years, lad, Yahweh has been working out His purpose among our people. We are His chosen ones whom He has led through untold suffering that we may teach the nations of the world of Himself. All the other peoples of the world worship idols, false gods of wood or stone. Only we know God, the one true God of spirit who must be worshipped in spirit.

Once we were slaves in Egypt. But God raised up for us an heroic leader[6] who defied the Pharaoh and guided us to this beautiful country where we made our homes and built our Temple at Jerusalem under our own wisest of all kings, Solomon.

Then, because some of our people were wicked and set up false gods and bowed down before them, God scattered us among the nations.[7] Our government was overthrown, our Temple was destroyed and we became slaves. But the memory of God did not die in every heart. Slowly a few, only a few, loyal Jews crept back to Jerusalem and began to rebuild the Temple.[8] Since then, the true faith has not wavered. Today, we are ruled by the Romans but they allow us great freedom in all questions of religious faith, and I make no doubt that when the great Messiah who has been promised us[9] shall come that he will restore to us our oldtime splendor and power."

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[6] *God raised up a leader.* This heroic leader was Moses. See Exodus 3 and 4.

[7] *Scattered among the Nations.* The ten tribes of Israel were conquered in battle and carried away into slavery by the Assyrians in

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842 B.C. The two remaining tribes of Judah, were conquered by the Assyrians in 732 B.C. Jerusalem was finally overthrown and the Temple destroyed by the Persians in 586 B.C.

[8] *Rebuilding the Temple.* Two great Jewish patriots were allowed by Cyrus, the Persian King, to return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., and rebuild the Temple. These were Haggai and Zachariah.

[9] *The Messiah.* Throughout all their troubled history, the Jews believed that God would send them a Messiah or Saviour who would lead them into a Kingdom of great power. But not all were agreed as to just how this should be done. By a study of their books scholars of today can understand that there were three different ideals held by three different types of thinkers. The first of these thought that this Messiah would be a king who would so organize and inspire them that they would become a strong united Nation, so rich and powerful that no other people could ever defeat them. See Zachariah 9:9, 10.

Another group of thinkers believed that this Messiah would come like a great angel sent direct from Heaven by God to destroy by his supernatural power all the enemies of the Jews, and bring all the scattered Jews together in a great rich, world-wide, eternal kingdom. This was a wonderful dream. It made them willing to endure suffering and wrong because they believed so earnestly that God would bring this to pass. See the last chapters of the book of Daniel.

The third group of thinkers believed that the Messiah who was to come would be a wise, loving, unselfish man who would so teach the people how to live and behave that all would become happy and good. See Isaiah 11:1-7. They believed that he would establish a kingdom but it would be a spiritual kingdom of peace and love and service which would come about slowly as men learned how to live in the best ways.

We do not know for certain just which type of Messiah Jesus believed himself to be but in Luke 4:18, 19, he seems to say that he thought of himself as a Messiah of the third type.

"Have we been told, good master, what the promised Messiah will do?" asked the little boy softly.

"A great prophet has said, my boy, that the Messiah shall come, saying, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prisons to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that they may be called the trees of righteousness.' "[10]

There was silence for so long in the little garden that it seemed as though both the old man and the child slept for Rabbi ben Ezra's head had fallen forward on his breast and the little boy sat quietly looking up at the stars. At last he spoke.

"Good master," he said, "he whom God has promised to send to us will teach us, for there must be greater knowledge, which when known, will lead us into power. Think you not that this coming one will tell all men how to live together without killing or torturing or hating each other? All men, I mean, both Jew and Gentile and these Romans who seem to scorn all mankind?"

The old man looked down at the child in amazement. "The promise was given to the Jews, lad. We are His chosen people. And yet—who knows? The prophet was sent to Nineveh[11] but God repented of His harsh purpose and spared the people. But what puts such strange thoughts into your mind? You take what I say and turn it inside out so that it means more than I thought."

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[10] *A great prophet.* See Isaiah 61:1-3.

"But the inside was there, good master, or I could never have discovered it."

"When the Messiah shall come he shall lead us into all truth," said the old man. "I hope I shall live to see his day."

"Do you think, master, that new truth could be as pleasant as old?"

Again the Rabbi seemed astonished but he only said, "It is time for sleep. Run now, or your mother will be anxious." But when the boy had gone he sat long and thought earnestly.

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[11] *The prophet sent to Nineveh.* See the book of Jonah. This is an interesting story of a man called Jonah who was commanded by God to go to Nineveh and tell the people of their sins. Jonah did not want to do this so he took passage on a boat that would carry him to Tarshish instead of Nineveh. But on the way to Tarshish a great storm came up and the sailors threw Jonah overboard and a whale swallowed him. We cannot tell the whole story here but in the end Jonah did go to Nineveh and tell them how wicked they were. When the people of Nineveh heard Jonah threaten that God would destroy them for their sins they repented, and left off doing all the wicked things they had been doing. Because they repented and sinned no more God forgave them and would not send the terrible punishments He had threatened. Jonah was not very happy over all of this. He had threatened in God's name and here was God being forgiving and kind to all kinds of people. He could not understand.

The writer of this book has shown us that God will forgive and love us even though we have done much wrong, if we repent of doing the wrong and do the right. The Jews had an idea that God would do this only for Jewish people but it is shown quite clearly in the book of Jonah that He will do it for all people.

"New truth," he repeated. "New truth. The child speaks as an innocent who yet gives wise men food for thought."

Things To Find Out.

1. Find out by reading in the book of Leviticus, chapter 19:9-18, and chapter 25:1-22 some of the laws which the little boy had to learn.

2. Find Psalms 113 to 118. Read them aloud. These were called the Hallel or songs of rejoicing.

3. Read note number five on page 50 and see if you can think of some differences between the school the little boy attended and the one you go to. Your rooms are light, airy and comfortable. You learn a great many interesting things about all kinds of people. You all share and share alike, both boys and girls. Is this a better kind of school? Are such schools a part of that kingdom of heaven which the Messiah was to bring to pass? Only such children could go to school in Nazareth as those whose parents wished to send them and could afford to pay for their teaching. In this country all children must go to school. That is the law. And the public schools are supported by the taxation of all the people.

Is this a good way to do? To whom do we owe the idea that every person is of value and should have a fair chance with every other person to be educated?

Things To Do.

1. Ask some one who is likely to know, your teacher or some friend, how paper is made today. See if you

can make paper out of the pith of some plant which resembles papyrus. The pith of the cat-tail is somewhat like the papyrus plant. Make some ink and try writing on your paper.

2. Dramatize the story of "In the Garden and At School," and act it. Select one law and learn it when you play school. For the laws, see Exodus 20:3-17. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," is a good law to learn. Exodus 20:16.

3. Continue work on the making of the market-street and place.

Suggestions for Dramatization. If you decide to dramatize the story about the school the first thing to do will be to make some plans. Decide where you want to have the play, in the garden or in the synagogue. Then while some members of the group make the scenery others can reread the story and decide on the action and characters of the play. Others may make the costumes and still others may decide on music to be used.

Do not try to learn any set form of dialogue but strive for the spirit of the play.

The Pharisee

No ONE ever knew how the little boy came to be in the synagogue when Jonas, the tailor, was tried on the accusation of Simon, the Pharisee, for the crime of breaking the Sabbath. Perhaps he had slipped in from the garden where he had been helping to water the flowers. Perhaps he followed father Joseph so closely that, in the noisy crowd, he was not noticed.

It is sure that he was sorry for Jonas for he knew him well. He had, in fact, heard the whole story from Jonas' own lips long before the day of the trial, but being a lad, he could do nothing for the poor fellow. Was he not accused by Simon, the Pharisee,[1] he of the

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[1] *The Pharisee.* When Jesus was a child there were three leading parties or societies of men in Palestine. These were the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Sadducees were among the rich, aristocratic powerful ones. The Essenes were men who lived in small communities by themselves. They did not marry or have property of their own or do any of the ordinary useful things that others did. The Pharisees were the ones who prided themselves on keeping the law in all its strictness and keeping themselves undefiled. They called themselves *holy* men. The society of the Pharisees was a secret society with four degrees. When a man joined the society of Pharisees his whole family, women and all, became members also.

Each Pharisee bound himself to observe the principle of tithing as it is described in Numbers 18:21-24, and Leviticus 27:30-33, and to avoid all Levitical uncleanness. He believed that if he prayed long enough he was sure to be heard of God. So he prayed long and often. See Matthew 6:7. They wore white robes with wide blue borders and deep fringes, for they believed they were being more pious than others by having fringe on their garments. They wore many phylacteries. These were square boxes or cases made of skin, two fingers breadth. The phylacteries were worn on the head and on the left arm. The head phylactery had four divisions holding tiny rolls of flowing, blue-bordered robes, the broad phylacteries and the pious prayers?

This was the story as Jonas told it to the lad.

"It was the Sabbath eve. I had been hurrying to finish the cloak for the Scribe Julius, who was to start early on the first day of the week to the marriage of his son in Capernaum.[2] The cloak was of linen[3] with borders of blue and deep fringes. I had worked hurriedly, knowing that the hour of the blessed Sabbath[4] approached when for a loyal Jew, a worshipper of the true God, to be at work was a deadly sin. I was very tired, so tired, lad, that my hands trembled and I scarce knew where to set my needle in the shining linen wedding garment."[5]

Joshua, looking into the tired face, felt only sorry for the poor trembling old tailor.

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parchment tied with white hairs from the tail of a cow. On them were inscribed in ink Exodus 13:1, 10, 11, 16, and Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. Such phylacteries were considered to be more holy than those worn by the high priest since they contained God's name only nine times while these contained it twenty-three times. The wearing of these phylacteries distinguished the cultivated and pious from common people who knew not the law. The Pharisees believed that strict obedience to the letter of the law was their whole duty.

[2] *Capernaum.* This was a large town at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee about twenty miles from Nazareth. It was the town to which Jesus went when he left Nazareth after his father Joseph died. There is now no trace of Capernaum left.

[3] *Linen.* Flax was raised and linen was woven from it but it was expensive and wool was more generally used.

[4] *The Sabbath.* See note number 1 on page 31 for a description of the Jewish Sabbath.

[5] *Wedding garment.* A specially fine and new garment for a wedding. It was worn in much the same spirit as impells people nowadays to dress in new and expensive clothes for a wedding. See Matthew 22:11.

"Could you not then finish it in time," he asked, "and so were tempted to work on the Sabbath?"

"That is what they say of me," faltered the old man. "But in God's name, no word of it is truth. Before the sun set on the holy Sabbath eve I set the last stitches in the cloak, and carrying it over my arm, I hastened to the Scribe's[6] house. He was not at home and as I sat by his threshold, waiting until he should come to pay me for my work, for I needed the money for my Sabbath food, Rabbi Simon, the Pharisee, he who is my accuser, passed and looked strangely at me."

"Why should he look strangely at you? Was not the garment finished and the sun yet in the sky? Of what could he accuse you?"

"Alas!" cried the old man, "my eyes are dim from much fine sewing, or I might have seen for myself. For as I sat there waiting, the sun set. The Sabbath had begun and I—I had a needle[7] in my girdle. The keen eyes of Rabbi Simon caught the gleam of my needle. He accuses me before all our people of Sabbath breaking, since, having the needle with me, I meant surely to use it if the need should arise."

"But you in nowise broke the law," said the boy eagerly. "And you needed the pay for your work to buy your Sabbath food. Rabbi Simon is rich. He cannot know what it means to need so small a sum of money. He is cruel. I shall tell Rabbi ben Ezra. What can they do to you if they find you guilty of breaking the Sabbath law?"

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[6] *The Scribes.* These were the professional writers who could be hired to write letters, deeds and other legal documents. They made copies of manuscripts and the scrolls of the Scriptures. They were held in the highest reverence as having great knowledge and authority.

[7] *Needles.* These were made of bone or of iron. Steel was just coming into use. Perhaps they had some steel needles for Damascus was the center of the steel industry.

"They can stone me, lad, or scourge me. I could even be put to death. Nay, do not look so frightened. It is written in the law that not only he who breaks the Sabbath law shall be condemned but that they who refuse to help with punishment shall themselves be guilty of sin."

The little boy was silent but his eyes were full of tears and in his heart was a great pity, for he knew the law and he feared the Pharisee.

"Rabbi ben Ezra will hear the evidence against you," he said. "He is wise and kind. He will be merciful."

The little boy had need of all his confidence in Rabbi ben Ezra's kindness to keep a brave heart as he watched the men gather for the trial.[8] In none of their faces could he find any kindness. They looked stern and cold. They seemed only in a hurry to have the trial over and get back to their own business. One or two grumbled together over having to come to a trial when there was so much to be done at home, and others talked together in low tones about the price of a good camel and where one might be bought.

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[8] *Civil Trials.* These trials were held in the synagogue or in the open spaces near the gates. The minister or officer of the synagogue was the presiding officer of the trial. They were held by a council or local Sanhedrin. These local Sanhedrins were composed of twenty-three members in large communities or seven in smaller towns. They had power to excommunicate, to scourge or to stone an offender but not to put him to death.

It was not until the poor, trembling, old tailor was led in by a guard that his accuser, Rabbi Simon, the Pharisee, came into the court room. The little boy looked at both of them and thought that of the two the Pharisee would be envied by most people. That he was rich was plain to be seen for his long, white, linen cloak with its deep fringes flowed backward as he walked, showing the phylacteries on his arms and the gleaming jewel that held it together over his shoulders. A servant walked behind him carrying his scrolls, and his parchment and reeds, while another servant carried a bowl of water for such washings as might be necessary if, by any chance he became defiled by touching something unclean.[9] That he was pious and holy the little boy could also understand for even as he entered the room he paused, bowed low, so low that the skin lay in folds over his heart, and repeated out loud the words of a beautiful prayer for mercy and humility. While poor Jonas, though he also moved his lips in prayer, looked haggard and frowsy and half-sick with terror and despair.

The little boy looked at Rabbi ben Ezra's face but saw nothing but calmness and intent interest in getting the trial under way and seeing that all was done legally and in order. His heart began to beat hard and fast in fear for his friend. There seemed to be no one to speak for him. Surely, surely they would not condemn him unjustly. But now they were speaking and the little boy held his breath to listen.

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[9] *Ceremonial Cleanliness.* Laws regarding ceremonial cleanliness may be found in Leviticus, 11th and 16th chapters. In washing the hands to secure ceremonial cleanliness the water was poured over the uplifted hands so that it flowed downward to the wrists. If the hands were known to be defiled two washings were necessary. The first was to remove the defilement and the second to remove the water that had removed the defilement. To omit such washings was to be guilty of gross carnal defilement which, so the Rabbis believed, would lead to poverty, even destruction.

Read Matthew 15:1, 2 and Mark 7:1-6 for accusations brought against Jesus concerning these ceremonial washings.

"This man," Rabbi ben Ezra was speaking, "known as Jonas, the tailor, having been arrested on the eve of the holy Sabbath on the charge of breaking in intent our most holy law concerning the Sabbath observance, is before you. Who is his accuser and what evidence is there that he is guilty as charged?"

When he began to speak the men stopped talking among themselves and listened intently as though they thought, "Now this will soon be over and we can go about our own business."

"Speak," went on Rabbi ben Ezra, "who accuses this man?"

Then the Pharisee stepped forward and said, "I am the man's accuser. In the name of our most holy law which was given us of God through his servant, Moses, to keep which is our most sacred duty, I accuse this man of working on the Sabbath."

"What labor did he do on the Sabbath that you should so accuse him?" Rabbi ben Ezra asked sternly.

"Of no actual labor but of the intent [10] to labor if need should arise since he bore his needle with him as he sat waiting to deliver the garment he had made. While he waited at the gate of his employer the sun set and the holy Sabbath began. I myself saw him and had him haled to prison lest the law be broken and he, lacking an accuser, we should all be found guilty before God."

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[10] *Intention.* The intent or the deliberate planning to do work if occasion should arise was held to be as wrong as the actual labor.

The Pharisee looked about him with satisfaction for he saw only horror and condemnation for the tailor in the faces of his hearers. Only one little boy's pale face and indignant eyes looked at him.

"You have heard the accusation," Rabbi ben Ezra said, turning to Jonas, the prisoner. "Have you anything to say in your own defence?"

Almost in spite of himself there had crept into Rabbi ben Ezra's voice a note of kindness. It helped Jonas to stand and speak in his own defence.

"It is true, Rabbi," he said, "that I carried the needle in my girdle as I waited to deliver my work and get my pay before the Sabbath should begin. But as God is my witness, I did not know that it was there. I did not mean to use it. My work was finished and the sun was still high in the heavens. I am poor, I needed the money for my work to buy food. It is not true that I brought the needle with the intent to change the garment if it should not fit. It is not true. I had but forgotten to lay it aside. But my employer was slow in coming and while I waited the sun set and the Sabbath began. I am innocent of any wrong. Let me go free for even now my children are crying for food."

He paused and looked at the Pharisee, then at the faces of his neighbors gathered to hear his story and at last at the judge, Rabbi ben Ezra. Only in his eyes did he see any kindness or pity. All the others were cold and unbelieving. The Pharisee rose and washed his hands from the water in the bowl which the servant carried.

"The fellow admits that he carried with him the tools of his trade," he said. "Who can doubt his intent? Does the shopkeeper leave the key in his lock on the Sabbath day? Does the carpenter carry his plane in his hand after his work is finished? Plainly the man is guilty and it becomes our duty as loyal servants of the law to punish him. If any of us fail in that duty we become equally guilty with the offender. It is so written in the law. I claim the privilege, nay the right since I detected the offence, of casting the first stone at this man."

The little boy, knowing what was to come, fled to the farthest corner of the garden and covered his ears with his hands to shut out the cries of Jonas as they dragged him to the stoning place.

Later Rabbi ben Ezra talked to him and tried to show him how the sacred law must be honored by strict obedience. But he cried out, "It is cruel and wicked to punish a poor man when he has done no real wrong but broken only the letter of the law. Simon, the Pharisee, is cruel. He is . . ."

Rabbi ben Ezra would not let him finish but held him close in his kind arms.

"When you are a man you will understand,"[11] he said.

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[11] *Jesus' understanding of the Pharisee.* See Matthew 23:13-15.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find out by asking questions or by reading, all you can about what is meant by, "the spirit of Phariseeism." Remember that the Pharisee considered that he was made holy and superior to others by wearing deep fringes on his garments, by wearing many phylacteries, by obeying the strict letter of the law about giving a tenth of his income to the church and by keeping himself ceremonially clean by many washings.

2. What else would a man need to do to be genuinely good?

3. Find out something about trials as they are conducted today. Who may accuse a man of wrongdoing? What is a jury? What is evidence? What are lawyers supposed to do for people accused of wrongdoing?

4. See if you can think of any ways in which a man or woman or child who is accused today of breaking the law has a better chance than Jonas, the tailor, had of being justly dealt with.

5. Has scourging or whipping been done away with in civilized countries? Why? Is whipping a legal punishment in any state in the Union?

6. A man who had broken our law about selling intoxicating liquor said in his own defence that he thought the law was unjust and so he felt no obligation to obey it. What do you think about him? Was he right?

7. A wise man has said, "One must never do that, which if all did the same, would work great harm to any individual." What do you think about that?

Things To Do.

1. Continue work in dramatizing the story of the school or, if you are not dramatizing that story, try to make a play out of this one about the Pharisee. To do this you will have to study the costumes and make them.

2. Ask some one to tell you about Magna Carta. You may read about it for yourself in a book called, "Modern Times and the Living Past," by Elson.

3. Write a little story about how Magna Carta came to be made and what it has done to help the cause of justice.

4. Play at conducting a trial by jury. Select a judge and a jury and see if you can decide a cause justly.

5. Find some charms and amulets. What virtue are they supposed to have? We call people superstitious who believe in charms. What is superstition?

The Rainy Day

It was raining. Not slow, warm, soft rain such as we have in summer but cold, heavy, steady rain that made the warm earth steam. It fell with a steady hiss on the low flat roofs of Nazareth. It lay over all the rough narrow streets and made them slippery. The water flowed down to the valleys as fast as it could. The little boy perched on a stool in the shop and looked out at all his small world that had been so warmly bright with sunshine and fresh blowing winds. Now it was drearily wet and cold. The gray old olive tree dripped silver rain. The tall green oak[1] tree bent its branches down towards the earth.

Be Be and her babies huddled wet and shivering in the courtyard.[2] The little boy called to them. "Ho e-e-e! Yo, ho-e-e-!" very softly and they came stumbling to the shelter of the shop roof where father Joseph gave them dry straw. Dochi followed and thrust his gray nose and long ears forward as though to say, "Why not let me in too?"

"You can come in too, Dochi," cried the little boy. "He can come, can't he, father? He is so cold."

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[1] There were three kinds of oak trees in Palestine. One was an evergreen. In earlier times people were sometimes buried under oak trees. Jacob buried the idols of his people under an oak. The tree had some peculiar religious significance. See Genesis 35:4.

[2] Some of the houses were built so that the cattle were sheltered under the same roof, almost in the same room with the people.

"Of course," said father Joseph. "Let him come in."

So Dochi and Be Be and the brown babies ate their straw not caring that the rain fell all day and all night until the narrow streets were full of rushing water and the low flat-roofed houses were dark and wet.

Father Joseph was busy and happy. He was making a yoke for oxen. "For," he said, "it will very soon be plowing time and some one is sure to need this for his ox." But there wasn't very much that the little boy could do. He watched father Joseph as his strong brown hands moved quickly and carefully. His kind eyes and pleasant lips smiled together at the little boy.

"I've been thinking, son," he said, "since you are growing up so very fast that perhaps you would like a gift I've been keeping for you."

"What is it?" cried the little boy. "I'm sure to like it. I couldn't help but like it. Have you got it here?"

"It was here not long ago," said father Joseph, pretending to look anxiously about among the shavings, back of a pile of boards and on a low.shelf where tools were scattered. "I wonder if I could have lost it?"

The little boy's heart sank. Almost the tears came to his eyes but he winked them back bravely.

"Was it very small?" he asked anxiously. "Perhaps it's fallen on the floor. I'll look." And he began to stir the shavings and dust on the floor with a stick. "Was it very bright?" he asked.

"Ah ha!" cried father Joseph. "I have it. I remember now. Baruch, the peddler, laid it here in this drawer. I thought I couldn't lose it. Now let us see what we have."

As he spoke he unfolded a wrapping of very dirty linen and the little boy saw a case of soft leather over a flat, narrow, short object.

"Baruch told me," said father Joseph, "that this came from the city of Damascus far to the north. He had it in payment of a debt from Ohēres, the maker of tools, and he gave it to me in gratitude. I could not have bought it for you, my son. It is far too costly for a poor man to buy. There are few like this in the world and only the rich may have them. But I did Baruch some small favor and he repaid me as he could. Unwrap it for yourself, lad. It is yours."

With fingers that trembled the little boy unwound the soft leather and gave a cry of surprised delight. Before him lay a small edged knife such as carpenters used for shaping wood or carving a delicate design on boxes and chests. The handle was made of silver[3] and olive wood but the blade was of iron[4] not too sharp and thin for little fingers but keen enough to cut fiber or skin or wood. Just what a boy would need most a dozen times a day and what he would have to have if he hoped some day to be a good carpenter. The little boy hardly dared touch it.

"Come, come!" cried father Joseph. "Will it cut? I am beginning to shape this handle. Will it smooth the wood so that it slips easily in the hand?"

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[3] *Silver.* Silver was in use for money and ornaments earlier than the time of Abraham. It was coined into money about 163 B.C.

[4] *Iron blades.* Iron and bronze were in use very early in Hebrew history. See Genesis 4:22. Steel was beginning to be known as it had been in use in India from very early times. It was imported from India into Damascus and was used in the making of fine swords and knives.

The little boy's fingers curved about the handle of the knife and laid the blade carefully along the white wood. A slender sliver of shining white flowed under his hand.

"It cuts! It really does cut!" he cried happily. "It is a wonderful knife. Now I can begin to learn to do things that will really help you. Oh, I do thank you and Baruch.[5] What was it that you did for him that he gave you this? It cuts so beautifully. See, I can fit these two parts together and the joining scarcely shows. What ever you did must have been very wonderful." It was not often that the little boy was so excited or talked so freely.

"It was not much that I did for Baruch," said father Joseph. "He was in trouble and I did what I could for him."

"Please tell me about it," said the little boy, whittling away at the plow handle.

"It was this way. Baruch, as you know, journeys from city to city with a pack of things to sell. Sometimes he has a donkey to carry his load. Sometimes he carries it himself. He has such things as dyed cloth, rings, bracelets and gold chains, charms and amulets, dyes, spices and perfumes, also small tools such as knives, scissors, razors and needles. He goes from one end of the world to the other[6] and has tales of all peoples at his tongue's end. Many wonderful things have happened to him, and to hear him tell it," father Joseph laughed softly, "he is a great brave hero. He has been robbed and beaten and left for dead on the caravan trail to Babylon but lived to boast of outwitting the bandits. He has been invited to the palace of Herod, the Tetrarch, to show his rings and jewels and perfumes to the princesses and they have fallen in love with him and begged him to stay. He is prodigiously cunning and can get twice what his goods are worth because he flatters his patrons, the merchants and the women."

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[5] *Baruch.* A fictitious name for a Jewish peddler. There were many of these. They were not highly esteemed.

[6] *End of the world.* The known world of that day was not so large as it is now. Father Joseph's world would be from India perhaps, to Egypt. Damascus, Babylon and Rome were names of cities of which he might have heard.

"Is he then so rich?" said the little boy. "He doesn't look rich. His coat was very ragged and dirty. I felt sorry for him."

"I saw him once," father Joseph went on, "when I too felt sorry for him. Any one would have for he was in prison.[7] He had been tortured and cast into a foul, dark, underground prison and almost forgotten. And yet he had done no great wrong. He had but boasted in an idle fashion around the soldiers' campfire that when the king which the Jews were expecting should come, the Romans would do well to guard the life of their emperor. It was a foolish boast. One that was sure to get him into trouble for the Romans consider it treason for any man to call himself king. They would imagine at once that poor Baruch had knowledge of some Jew who considered himself a king. At least they lost no time in trying to find out just what he did know, for they thrust him into prison and threatened him with torture unless he told all that he knew about this Jewish king. Not knowing anything in particular about any king and not quite daring to make up a tale which might get others into desperate trouble, poor foolish Baruch refused to talk and was stretched on the rack[8] and swung over the pits[9] and then thrown contemptuously aside as worthless. It was in prison that I found him and carried to him some small comforts of food and medicine, and, through my friendship, so he says, though I am poor and unknown of any in power, he was finally released. I but spoke to a kinsman who in his turn spoke to our great Rabbi Hillel[10] of the kind heart and understanding mind, and he interceded for his countryman. It was not I who freed him but he professes to believe that I did and is grateful. It is written in our law, my son, Rabbi ben Ezra will tell you as well as I, that we should love[11] and serve each other since all are children of one great father, even He who guards Israel. Think always of that when you look at your beautiful knife."

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[7] *Prisons of torture*. The prisons of Palestine were very dreadful places. They were mostly underground. They were walled with stone. They were dark and airless and foul with filth and odours. It was the custom to torture prisoners to make them confess and as a punishment.

"I shall thank Baruch when I see him," said the little boy. "Poor Baruch!"

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[8] *The rack.* An instrument of torture on which the body was stretched, first the arms and legs, then the whole body.

[9] *The pit.* This was torture by fire. A body was swung over a pit of fire close enough to inflict great agony but not actually to kill.

[10] *Hillel.* One of the greatest, wisest, and kindest of the Jewish Rabbis.

[11] *The law of love.* For this law, read Leviticus 19:18.

Things To Find Out.

1. In Jesus' time men knew the use of metals in a very limited way. In very early times Tubal Cain worked in metal. This was perhaps bronze, a mixture of tin and copper. Later, iron was discovered but no very extended use was made of it in Jesus' time. Steel was beginning to come into use. Steel is iron which has been put through a hardening, refining process. See if you can find out why it is possible for us to make so much greater use of iron and steel than these people did.

2. Visit a steel mill if possible and watch the smelting process. Learn how iron is taken from the earth and under what conditions men who do our mining, work and live.

The iron is embedded in the earth. It is something man had not made for himself but which is given by a greater power. By cooperating with this power with labor and intelligence man gains great good for himself. Try to think of some great good man has gained through his use of metals. What metals other than those named do we have today? Give the names of some of the great workers in industrial and artistic fields in metals.

3. Find out all you can about our prisons. Visit a prison or jail if possible and note such points as these—cleanliness, light, air, food, work, care of the sick, learning to work, playing games, reading in books furnished by the prison, religious services, and punishments.

Why have such changes come about? Are they due to Christian teachings? Where may one find any teaching of Jesus that would encourage humane treatment of criminals? See Matthew 7:12.

Things To Do.

1. On the sand-table model which you are making of Nazareth and its surroundings, add the shop of a worker in metals. Make his smelting furnace and some of his tools. What fuel would he use to make a fire hot enough to melt gold or silver?

Make the figure of the metal worker and place him before his forge.

2. Read Luke 4:29, 30. Show in your model of Nazareth the brow of the great hill over which they tried to throw Jesus when he returned to his home and preached in the synagogue.

3. Make the figure of Baruch with his pack on his back.

Sowing Time

Of all the work that went on in busy Nazareth the little boy remembered best the fall plowing and sowing of wheat and barley. It came just after the first rains[1] when father Joseph had given him his wonderful knife.

He had gone with Ruth to get a basket of wheat to grind into meal between the great stones that they might make some bread.

"Why," cried Ruth, "it's well that Abash can begin to plow for this pit[2] is almost empty. We shall have to open another tomorrow."

"Another what?" said the little boy.

"Another pit of wheat," answered Ruth. "This one is almost empty. But I saw Abash with his plow this morning. He was taking it to your father Joseph's shop to be mended. I think he means to plow soon, now that the first rains have come to soften the hard earth."

"I am going to run and watch my father mend the plow," said the little boy. "If it is almost finished I shall ask him if I may go with Abash to the fields and help him sow and plow."

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[1] *The former rains, or the first rains.* These came in the month of Tishri which corresponds to our September and October. There were two seasons in the year in Palestine, the rainy season and the dry season. The first rains began in September and October and were called, "the former rains." After them came the sowing of fall wheat and barley. Late in what corresponds to our December and January there came more rains. These were called "the latter rains." See Deuteronomy 11:14. The rainy season was winter. See Song of Solomon 2:11.

[2] *This pit.* Grain was sometimes stored for safe keeping in dry lime stone pits of which there were many. It was sometimes stored in large pots sunk in the earth and covered with stones. A small supply of grain for daily needs was kept in bins or jars in the house.

This made Ruth laugh. "Now what could you do," she said, "that would help Abash? You would just be in the way."

But the little boy didn't hear for he was running as fast as he could towards the carpenter's shop. Even before he reached there he could see Abash's white oxen and hear the tap, tap of father Joseph's hammer as he sent some nails [3] into the broken handle. He came up panting, for one had either to run up hill or down in Nazareth. There was no level ground.

"Abash," he cried, "if father will let me, may I go with you to the fields and help sow the seed? Please, Abash."

"You may ride Omri, the white ox," said Abash kindly. "He is gentle and will not shake you too much."

The little boy looked anxiously at father Joseph. He was smiling so he knew that he could go.

"Oh, thank you Abash," he cried. "I'd love to ride Omri."

So the little boy rode out of the village on Omri feeling very proud and happy. A sturdy little donkey walked just ahead of him carrying the seed and the plow. There was a delicious freshness in the air. The long dry heat of the summer was past. Now there would be winter with more rains that would make the grass and the flowers spring up green and beautiful. Now they must get the seed of grain into the earth or there would be no bread for hungry people.

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[3] *Nails.* Many hand wrought nails made of iron have been found of late, by explorers in Palestine, showing that they were in common use.

Abash carried the barley seed in a skin bag[4] under his left arm when he began to sow. Before he plowed he sowed the seed thickly over a small part of the field. Round and round he walked slowly and as he walked he cast the seed far and wide over the field. Some of it fell among the rocks. Some fell in the road. But much of it fell on fertile soil where, after the plow should loosen the earth, it would sink down and begin to grow.[5]

But now there was work for the little boy and all the other boys and girls who had come to the fields to help, for the hungry birds came in flocks and would have eaten much of the grain if they had not been driven away. The boys threw clods and shouted and ran about frightening them. Close behind Abash, as he scattered his seed, followed Jacob with the plow to cover it quickly.[6] A great deal of shouting went on. Jacob called, "It la! It la!" to his ox to make him go on. Or, "Hun wa! Hun wa!" when he wished him to stand still. Boys called to each other and laughed together as they ran races over the hillside.

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[4] *Skin bag.* A skin bag used for carrying grain or water or wine was made of the entire skin of the sheep or goat. It was first carefully removed from the animal and cured. The head and feet openings were closed. These skins were sometimes also used as churns.

[5] *The Sowing.* For Jesus' memory of the sowing, read Matthew 13:1-9. For a famous simile about the growth of wheat, see 1st Corinthians 15:35-38.

[6] *Plow and plowing.* The plow was little more than a crooked stick sharpened at one end and tipped with iron. Sometimes a pick axe was used to loosen the earth in places the plow could not reach. See "People of Palestine," Grant, page 39.

Soon the land lay broken into furrows, not very straight or deep to be sure, but enough so that when the men following had beaten and broken the clods into finer earth it looked smooth and dark. The little boy, walking barefooted over the plowed land, felt it cool and damp between his toes. The sun shone warmer and warmer. Poor Jacob was soon wet with sweat and so was Ormi. So they rested in the shade of a sycamore tree while Abash hitched the red ox, Camri, to the plow and made him work.

Soon it was time for them all to rest, so they sat by the plowed land and ate their dinner and talked. Abash gave the little boy some of his onion and bread and they gathered with the other workers about a great dish of leben in which they took turns dipping their bread.[7] Then they slept a little and when they awoke it was near evening. Abash said he would plow a little more now that it was cooler but the little boy lay on the ground and looked up at the sky. There he saw a very thin half circle of silver light. As the sun sank lower and lower this silver circle grew brighter. It was the new moon.[8]

The little boy called to Abash and pointed to the sky.

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[7] *Common Dish.* This might contain any food, broth, meat, wine or milk in which all shared. Each person dipped his bread in the dish. Leben is a preparation of milk. It is not a cheese but something between cheese and fresh milk. It is a very wholesome dish.

[8] *The new moon.* These people observed what we call the lunar month. The appearance of the new moon was the occasion for a feast. Its changes marked the beginning of the months and the coming of the Sabbaths or every seven days.

Abash looked and called to the other workers. "See," he cried. "The moon! The new moon! Now it is time for feasting."

Things To Find Out.

1. Can you imagine how primitive man first found that he could plant and get an increase of grain? See H. G. Wells' "Outline of History," Volume I, page 116, for some suggestions.

2. Compare the tools with which Abash worked with the tools the modern farmer has. We have the tractor for plowing, and the seeder for sowing. Name some of the other tools we have. There has been a long, slow, steady improvement in tools and methods of cultivating the land. To what great inventors do we owe this improvement? Name two or three.

3. What do you think of the kind of service an inventor gives to us all? Read Mark 10:43, 4.

Things To Do.

1. Make on your sand-table model of Nazareth some wheat and barley fields outside of the town. Some were in the valley. Some were on the hillsides. Did they have fences?

2. Read Matthew 13:1-9 and then tell the parable of the sower. What is a parable? Tell what you think this parable means.

Evil Spirits

THE grain in the pits was getting so low that they could scarcely reach it, so much had been taken out for the fall sowing.[1] The little boy even climbed down into the pit to fill the basket for his mother. When the basket was full she drew it up with a rope then helped the little boy out in the same way.

"It's a good thing that the seed is coming up," she said. "See how green the fields are with the new wheat. We shall have a great harvest."

The little boy looked far out over the curving hills. They lay softly green and shining under the warm sunshine. Tomorrow it might rain again but that would only make them greener. The grass too had sprung up under the first rains. The little boy smiled to see the hungry goats and donkeys searching everywhere for a mouthful of fresh tender grass. They had had nothing but dry food for so long. He even imagined he could see the shepherds away on some distant hill with the larger flocks of sheep though he knew they would not come home until the time for the sheep-shearing festival which would not be until after the spring rains when the cold of winter would be past.[2]

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[1] *Fall Sowing.* Some of the sowing in Palestine was done in the fall after the first rains. Barley was sown first, then wheat, millet and rye. Rye was also called spelt. Some grain was sown after the spring rains also.

[2] *Sheep Shearing.* The production of wool was one of the leading industries of the country. The shearing of the sheep was made into

But, though the grain was planted and it was not yet time for sheep shearing, there was plenty of work for every one in Nazareth. Oh, plenty of work! More than could be done![3] The little boy, running here and there, now in the market-place, now in the synagogue or at school, helping his father Joseph in the shop or his mother about her constant labor, playing with his little brothers, for by this time he had two brothers, James and Joses, was busy and happy all day long. He thought that the time was too short for all that he wanted to do.

While they were sowing the grain, he had gone to the fields with the men and helped to scare away the birds. Now he went with the workers who tended the grape vines. These had been pruned after the grapes had been picked in the summer but now they must be dug about and fertilized. They were just beginning to put out tiny green tendrils.[4] The fruit trees must be

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a festival time and all the members of a clan or tribe congregated to help. It came later in the year after the danger of cold weather was past. See 1st Samuel, 25.

[3] *Work.* Contrary to general opinion which sees in primitive life only laziness and ease, such people as these we are studying about, worked *very* hard. They worked also with poor, heavy, dull tools. The ground was hilly and rocky in the extreme. They had always a long dry season. Of course they were content with much less than people have nowadays either of food or clothing or amusement. But they were happy and carefree, even joyous. They had many feasts and celebrations.

[4] *Grape Culture.* The cultivation of the grape was another leading industry. Large vineyards spread over the terraced hills. The vines were seldom supported by stakes or trellised but lay almost on the ground. Half ripe grapes were eaten with salt and considered a great delicacy. Some of the grapes were made into raisins but the most of them were made into wine. Each village had its own wine press. Sometimes small animals, especially foxes, spoiled the grapes. Sometimes the palmer worm came as a pest.

cared for too,[5] and the gardens plowed and planted. Sometimes he went with the women to the thickets outside the town to help them bring in brush and grass for fuel.[6] Every day there was washing going on at the fountain.[7] He loved to look in at the weaving house where the looms clacked and clashed as the slow yards of cloth grew under the weaver's hands.[8] Innumerable small spinning wheels whirred continually in the homes that the men who reeled the thread might be kept busy. It was always interesting to watch the lime and charcoal burners come in with their loads; the one white with lime dust, the other powdered all over with black from the smoke of the burning wood.[9]

When the wind blew from the east he thought of Abasi, the tanner, for he could smell the hides.[10] By and by these would become bottles for wine and water and milk, or leather for coats and saddles and harness but no one wanted Abasi's tannery inside the town.

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[5] *Fruit Trees.* These would be the olive, the fig, the mulberry, the pomegranate, the apple or apricot, and probably dates.

[6] *Fuel.* It was woman's work to go outside the town each day and bring in fuel for the ovens and the cooking in the form of sticks and grass. They carried it in great bundles on their heads. This was hard dangerous work.

[7] *Washing.* This was done in the small stream made by the overflow from the fountain, by the women and girls. There were few clothes to be washed and these were not washed often. The clothes were laid on a rock and beaten with sticks to remove the dirt. Soap is not mentioned in connection with washing clothes.

[8] *Spinning and Weaving.* These occupations went on continuously both in the homes and in shops. Both men and women did this work. For further ideas about making woolen cloth see page 182.

[9] *Lime and Charcoal.* Lime was made from the abundant lime stone in the earth while charcoal was made from wood and used in the braziers for heating purposes.

[10] *The Tanner.* The tanner was required by law to live outside the town. This was for sanitary reasons. In Acts 9:43 we may read about the apostle, Paul, living with a tanner.

Joash, the butcher, had his stalls as close to the market-place as he was allowed. Old, old Obi, the potter,[11] shaped his jars and bowls with cunning deft fingers, while the women wove baskets of reeds and straw[12] and brought them to the market full of fish, or fruit or eggs to sell. No one was idle in Nazareth except the beggars and the sick and crippled ones, they who would not or could not work. But whether they worked or lay all day in the sunshine, the little boy knew and loved them all and was loved in return. To him life seemed full of interest and excitement; the world a place of thrilling adventure in which he had a full share.

But there was more to life in Nazareth than daily work; more than exciting stories of heroes who lived long ago; more even than dreams of the future. There was something deeper and more mysterious than any of these things. There was another world all about him peopled with spirits, unseen but very real.[13] God was a spirit so his mother had told him, a good spirit who loved and who should be loved in return. But there were other spirits not good who must be guarded against. The little boy had been told that God sent His angels to guard and protect and guide those who trusted in Him; [14] that Satan, the Evil One, sent his demons to torment men. The angels, so they told him, came from Heaven but the demons came from Hell. So underneath all the sunshine and laughter and love there lurked always the fear of these evil ones who went about tempting men to do wrong, who even entered into men's bodies and would not come out. No matter how happy one seemed, there was always this great fear, this terrible danger, this deep dark mystery to be endured.

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[11] *Pottery.* This is one of the oldest industries in the world. The potter works with clay and water to make jars and bowls and dishes. Obi probably had a potter's wheel but much of his work would be done by hand. He would have many helpers to bring the clay, to pulverize it and soften it with water, to set it carefully in the sunshine or to tend the ovens while it fired.

[12] *Baskets.* This also is an ancient industry. Baskets were made of willow and also of various kinds of reeds and of straw. Baskets were used for many purposes. See Genesis 40:16 for the story of three white baskets.

[13] *Spirits, good and evil.* Belief in good spirits, or angels and evil spirits, or demons was almost universal. It was a belief in which Jesus shared and which persists among primitive peoples even today. See Matthew 12:22-28.

That this should be true the little boy could not but believe for he had seen a man he knew and loved held and torn by some mysterious power beyond his understanding. The man was Meanesse, the weaver, who was no longer allowed to come inside the walls of Nazareth but must live in the low cave beyond the gates. The little boy could remember when Meanesse lived with his wife and children on the market-street as busy and happy as any one. He could remember how suddenly one day he and others had seen Meanesse fall to the earth and lay writhing and moaning unable to rise or speak.[15] When they had lifted him to his feet he could not stand but fell backward making strange unintelligible sounds through lips that frothed.

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[14] *Guardian Angels.* See Psalms 91:11-12.

[15] *Meanesse falls.* This imaginary character is made to fall down in a fit. This was probably an epileptic fit. Some types of epilepsy cause the victim to fall, moaning and writhing and finally to sink into unconsciousness. Partial paralysis sometimes follows these attacks.

They had called a physician[16] but his remedies had been of no effect, so they had been forced to believe that poor Meanesse had become possessed of an evil spirit. "A demon has entered into him," they whispered among themselves. "Do not go too near or he may leap out at you and tear you into pieces." So one by one everyone had crept away and left Meanesse lying there in the street. Even his wife and his children had run away to their home and shut the door to keep out the Evil One.[17] When they had all gone the little boy crept back to see if there was anything he could do to help his friend, the kind jolly Meanesse who had told him stories and given him cakes from his oven. His heart was full of a great pity.

"Lean on me," he had whispered. "I am much stronger than you might think. Tell me what to do and I will help you."

"To the cliffs," Meanesse had muttered through his swollen lips. "To the cliffs."

So between them, the little boy bearing as much of the man's weight as he could, and the man dragging himself by his arms, for the demons were in his legs, they did at last manage to come to a small cave in the cliff outside the town but here the evil spirit seized once more upon poor Meanesse and threw him and twisted him, making him froth and curse and fall at last into a stupor from which the little boy could not arouse him.

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[16] *A physician.* Each town had a physician by order of the Rabbis. But the remedies of the times were so inadequate that few cures were effected. Many quack doctors were available and each family had home remedies to say nothing of charms and incantations. One of Jesus' disciples, Luke, was a physician. A physician made use of wine and oil, of cold water compresses and certain diets and also of simple vegetable compounds but in the main the common people at least suffered from the vilest forms of quackery and absolute neglect. All forms of insanity were common, as were blindness, palsy and leprosy. Cripples were everywhere since there was little surgery outside of the large Egyptian cities.

[17] *Possessed.* A man thought to be possessed of an evil spirit was feared and shunned. He was often driven out to the cliffs and caves to live alone as best he could.

"This Evil One must leave him sometime," the little boy thought. "I will bring food and water and leave them here where he can reach them. Then he went sorrowfully away.

When he came again to the cave the food and water were gone and Meanesse sat by the opening in the cave in the sunshine.

"Has the Devil gone out of you?" he asked.

Meanesse answered thickly, "He has gone save for one leg. On that one he keeps fast hold that he may enter at will and torment me. Even now I may not rise and walk. You are the only one who dares come near me."

"They fear the Evil One," answered the little boy.

"And do you not fear Beelzebub?[18] For what other can it be who so possesses me?"

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[18] *Beelzebub*. The prince of devils. The terms, Evil One, Demon, Devil, Beelzebub, and Satan all refer to the same spirit. This was the common belief about the devil or Satan. Satan was once an angel (Isaiah 14:12) but because of his great pride God cast him and all his companions headlong out of heaven. Satan then set up a kingdom for himself in some place under the earth or within it, from which he sent demons out through God's kingdom to tempt men to do evil. But Satan still feared God and was subject to Him, so that men who believe in and trust God need have no fear of Satan. This is but an old superstition, a tale which grew up out of man's efforts to understand why there seems to be evil in the life of men. We no longer believe in angels or demons who interfere with man's destiny.

The little boy's face was pale. He trembled. Yet he stood by his friend. "I am afraid of the Evil One," he said. "But who will care for you if I go away?"

Things To Find Out.

1. The people of Jesus' time worked very hard and had very little in return. They had poor, heavy, ineffectual tools. They had none of the marvellous machinery or power that we have. None of the wonderful inventions of our day had helped them.

One reason we have much more than they had is because of the patient, tireless, self-sacrificing work of inventors and research workers in science.

How many of these people have you heard of and for what are they known? Benjamin Franklin, Eli Whitney, Elias Howe, Orville Wright, Luther Burbank, Thomas Edison.

Have these people been unusually well paid for their labor, or honored in their lifetime?

Why were they willing to work so hard?

Do you think Jesus' idea of service influenced them in any way?

For Jesus' grown-up idea read Matthew 20:25-28.

Do you think these gifted unselfish people were really trying unselfishly to serve us all because they are convinced that Jesus was right and that service to man is service to God?

2. When Jesus was a child little was known of medicine or the scientific care of the sick. Most of the doctors were what we think of as quacks, or "medicine men", i.e., they who by charms and incantations, by

furious noises and cunning tricks prevented or drove away the evil spirits that harmed people.

There was little or no scientific knowledge of the body or drugs or of food. There was very little knowledge of surgery and nursing. None of infection.

All of our tremendous knowledge of these things, our practice of kind, skillful care of the sick, has been built up steadily by devoted men and women, some of whom have actually given their lives that we might have knowledge.

What do you know about Col. Leonard Wood and the Island of Culion? About the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research? About Surgeon Gen. W. C. Gorgas and yellow fever?

Isn't all of this Christian service? What was it Jesus said or did that inspired all of this?

Read John, 15:12-14.

Things To Do.

1. Act the story of Meanesse and the little boy. In planning, try to think how many people will be needed to act. Try next to think how many scenes there will be in your play. Then try to think what each person must say. Try out several in the different parts and see who does each part best.
2. Make some costumes for the actors in the different parts.
3. Paint some stage scenery and get together the stage properties you will need.
4. Give your play before some other group in your school.

5. Read about The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Tell stories to your class-mates of some of the efforts now being made to cure such diseases as cancer and leprosy.

6. Name one great hero in the medical field.

Visitors to Nazareth

OVER the steep hills and down through the deep hot valleys wound the narrow rough road from the city of Damascus in the north to the city of Ptolemais on the coast of Palestine.[1] On its way it passed through Nazareth where the little boy lived. Hardly a day passed but that some interesting people came over the road. It might be only a shepherd with his dusty flock and his fierce red dogs. It might be a teacher or a holy man with his followers, walking through the country, stopping here and there to talk to any people who cared to listen. It might be the camel caravan of some great merchant on his way to the city markets, carrying rich cloth cunningly embroidered, perfumes, dyes, medicines, rare spices and foods, or even slaves from the deserts to the rich people in Egypt or in the towns along the way.[2] It might be Roman soldiers in chariots driving fast horses all gleaming in golden harness.[3] It might even be Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch going from his capitol at Tiberias to visit the Emperor in Rome. Almost any one might pass over the main highway.

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[1] *Roads in Palestine.* Recent excavations by archeologists have shown traces of but three main roads in ancient Palestine. None of them passed through Nazareth. But Edersheim says in "Sketches of Jewish Social Life," page 44, that a main highway from Damascus to Ptolemais passed directly through Nazareth. The presence of such a highway would make a great deal of difference in the character of life in the community and in the early impressions a sensitive child might retain. That there were roads in Palestine, some of them at least twenty-four feet wide and maintained at public cost we have evidence. See 1 Kings 12:18. Also Ezra 4:13-20. And Deuteronomy 19:3.

But the roads, when they did exist, were no such wide, smooth, well cleaned and lighted thoroughfares as we know. They were probably more narrow, steep and winding with little to distinguish them from the surrounding fields. Over them would travel camel caravans in the main, but occasionally a horse-drawn chariot or oxen-drawn cart. Most travel was by foot or by donkey or camel back.

Aside from the main highways of which Edersheim says there were six, the land was threaded by narrow pathways perhaps six feet wide which wound about over the hills but were impassable for wheeled vehicles.

Many times it was bands of loyal Jewish people on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate some great feast.[4] When these came there was great happiness and excitement throughout Nazareth for there would be sure to be among them relatives or friends of people in Nazareth who would be waiting to join the party and together, they would all journey along towards Jerusalem and the wonderful golden Temple of their dreams which stood there. Whatever or whoever it was who came by would stop in Nazareth for water. For the way was long and rough and dusty and Nazareth was famous for its water.[5]

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[2] *Caravans.* These caravans represent the commercial life of the times, taking the place of our trains, busses and trucks. They were made up of donkeys and camels. A number of drivers directed by caravan leaders or masters were a part of the caravan like a crew that goes with a train.

[3] *Roman Soldiers.* The Romans maintained garrisons throughout Palestine at this time and the Roman soldier was a well-known figure, also one that was hated and feared.

[4] *Jewish People.* These journeyed to Jerusalem at least once a year in large groups to celebrate the feast of the Passover in the temple there. It was to this feast that Jesus was taken when he was twelve years old.

[5] *Water of the Fountain.* It is said that the people in Palestine acquired a fine taste for water. So much so that they could tell at once

As often as Joshua went to the fountain for water when his mother was too busy or too tired or even when he went to play, he loved to watch for people passing. Just to see them made him wonder about the great world of people beyond his own home; made him long to know more about strange lands far away, and, though he might feel too small and shy to ask questions, he listened eagerly to all that was said.[6]

It was in this way that he first saw the holy man of the desert and his disciples,[7] and this, together with the stories his father Joseph told him of the prophets of olden times, made him wish more and more that he too might become a wise and honored teacher of holy things, might in some peculiar sense become God's man.

It was evening when the holy man reached Nazareth. He had walked far. His sandals were so worn by the stones of the road that his feet were cut and bleeding. The scrip or bag slung under his shoulder in which he carried food was quite empty. He wore no clothing except a ragged skin tunic. His long matted hair and

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where certain water came from. The water from the fountain at Nazareth was said to be particularly fine.

[6] *Strange Talk.* The language spoken in Palestine was a mixture of many languages, Greek, Assyrian, Hebrew and Roman and a dialect which it is said Jesus spoke, called Aramaic.

[7] *Holy Men. The Seer.* For an idea of a seer, read 1 Samuel 9:1-10. Samuel was a Seer as well as a Judge in Israel.

The Ecstatic or Nabi or prophet. For a description of the ecstatic state read 1 Samuel 11:6. The means taken to induce the ecstatic state were as described in the story, rhythms of song and movement, self lacerations, and hypnotism. Under these conditions the Nabi or prophet was presumed to have second sight and hearing. 11 Kings 6:7. The Nabi was God's man. He was therefore held in peculiar reverence.

beard, his deep wild eyes full of a strange glow, made him seem mysterious and a little terrifying.

A few tired looking men followed him at a little distance. One of these, when he at last sank on the road by the fountain, brought him a drink of the cool water and knelt before him offering him the cup. This he drank but when another offered him a handful of dried grain Joshua heard him say, "Do not tempt me to eat for my vow is not yet fulfilled."[8]

"Eat but a little, Master, or your strength will fail and your holy vow never be redeemed."

"God will strengthen me with His spirit. My vow is made unto Him."

"He is a holy man," whispered one man to his neighbor. "A holy man! We must honor him for he may be able to explain more to us about God."

The little boy, Joshua, listening and watching heard the whisper and saw the look of awe and reverence of the people gathered about the stranger.

"Perhaps he is a prophet," whispered another. "Might he not even be that holy One promised of God[9] who shall redeem Israel? Have not our wise men told us that he shall come soon and in humble guise?"

While they watched and whispered among themselves, drawing closer and closer to the little group of travellers by the fountain, they saw a strange sight.

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[8] *A Vow.* This would be an oath taken solemnly: a promise to God as it were, to do some particular service. See Judges 11:29-40 for a record of Jephthah's vow.

[9] *The Promised One.* This is a reference to the Messiah for whose coming the Jewish people awaited so anxiously. Their great prophet Isaiah had foretold his coming.

Though the traveller had at first been so tired and weak, he seemed suddenly to grow strong. At first he could only lie on the ground and groan but soon he sat up and began to chant a kind of a long-drawn-out wail of which they could understand no words except now and then, "Yahweh!" "Woe!" and "Wrath!" Then rising to his feet but standing still, his body began to sway to the rhythm of his words until his arms and legs too began to move and the holy man in an ecstasy of emotion danced and shouted, turning ever faster and faster in the wilder rhythms of the dance until his ragged garment whipped about him and his long matted hair streamed about his head. His face was pale. His deep eyes glowed like living fire. A little froth lay on his lips and flecked his breast. And ever as he spun faster and faster his chant became louder and more threatening.

The little boy, watching in fascination, saw the men who had followed the holy man join in the dance. One drew from his girdle a whip with knotted thongs and beat himself across the legs and shoulders. Another carried a knife with which he cut himself until the blood ran down over his legs to the ground.

Round and round they went in the circles of this wild dance, chanting some words like the measure of a song repeated over and over until through all the listening watching crowd there ran a deep excitement and their bodies began to sway in sympathy, their feet to beat out the measure of the rhythms and they, too, joined in the chant of impassioned words.

It was almost more than the little boy could bear.

He was like a little bird who is fascinated by a snake. Part of him wanted to run away up the hill to his quiet home where his father and mother waited but part of him thrilled and swayed with the music of the dancing dervishes[10] of the desert and held him there against his will.

Suddenly the leader of the wild dancers paused. His body stiffened. His knees gave way and his body fell forward in the dust. At once all the others stopped howling and stamping and whirling and dropped upon the ground where they lay like dead men. A great silence fell upon the crowd. A few slipped away to spread the news among their friends while others came with water and food and bandages for the exhausted strangers. For, strange as it seems, such pilgrims were held in awe and often in great honor by the people as ones who might have some peculiar knowledge of power from God. No man spoke harshly to them or refused to help them for who could tell when God might send them some special message as He had sent prophets of old to warn and direct his chosen people?[11]

But the little boy, shaken and thrilled and awed, crept away and ran home to ask his father Joseph the meaning of it all. And there, when he had stopped trembling and could listen understandingly, father Joseph told him about prophets and holy men.

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[10] *Dancing Dervishes.* These are to be met with even today in Eastern countries. They live in solitude in remote places only emerging occasionally to mingle with men and whirl themselves into a frenzy of emotion.

[11] *Prophets.* The Hebrew people had many prophets. Chief among them were Elisha and Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, Daniel and Isaiah.

He said, "In all ages God has spoken to his chosen people, Israel, through prophets. Prophets are wise good men who give themselves to God's service to help all the people to understand what God would have them be and do and what they must do to live in the right way. But man may not speak to God or hear Him speak as he talks to another man. He must be a very wise and good man and must prepare himself to hear God in a peculiar way. Our God has so chosen and taught many great men in the past, always by some sign or vision which has helped the man to realize that he was so chosen. Have we not told you often of Moses, the great leader and giver of our holy law?"[12]

"Yes," whispered Joshua reverently.

"It was given to him," father Joseph went on, "to see God in a burning bush and hear His voice. The vision and the voice came to Moses as he walked in the mountain guarding his flocks, while in reality he was trying to gain the courage and will to risk his life in service to his own people. As he sat thinking unhappily about what he wished might be done, he suddenly saw a bush that but a moment before had been but a green shrub like all the other bushes, glow with a deep fire. And though it seemed to burn it was not consumed. Moses walked toward the bush saying to himself, 'I will find out why this bush seems to be on fire and yet is not burnt.'

"Then the voice of God came to him out of the bush and said, 'Moses! Moses!'

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[12] *Moses.* For an account of Moses' call to leadership and service read Exodus 3.

"'I am here,' answered Moses wonderingly.

"And, the voice said, 'I am the God of thy fathers. The God of Abraham. The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'

"Then Moses was afraid and hid his face with his cloak for he dared not look at God.

"But the voice went on and on to tell Moses what he must do to save his people from the wicked Egyptians who kept them slaves. Moses obeyed God and became the greatest of all teachers and leaders.

"Many years after this," father Joseph went on, "God appeared to another prophet named Jeremiah. While Jeremiah was but a child like you God spoke to him and said, 'Before you were born I sanctified you and ordained you to be a prophet.' And Jeremiah said, 'I cannot speak. I am a child.' But God said, 'Say not, "I am a child." For thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces for I am with thee to deliver thee.' And the Lord put forth His hand and touched his mouth and said, 'Behold I have put my words in thy mouth.' "[13]

Father Joseph and the little boy were quiet for a long time. They were thinking of the wonder of being so chosen by God to speak His words. Then father Joseph said, "There was still another, greater even than Jeremiah, who was spoken to by God, whose words are read every day in our synagogue. He was called Isaiah.[14] He tells us that as he sat one day in the temple he saw God sitting upon a high throne with the angels standing about Him. And the angels were singing, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.' Then Isaiah said, 'Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips.' Then one of the glorious angels which stood by God's throne took a pair of tongs from the altar, seized in them a live coal and flew with it to Isaiah and pressed it upon his lips saying, 'Lo, this has touched thy lips and thine iniquity has been taken away and thy sin has been purged.' Then Isaiah heard the voice of God saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us.'

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[13] *Jeremiah.* Read Jeremiah 1:5-9 for this account.

[14] *Isaiah.* Read Isaiah 1:1-9 for this account.

"With his clean lips on which the angel of God had set the coal of living fire Isaiah said, 'Here am I; send me.'

"So you see, my son, that the prophet, even though he seem strange, must not be scorned nor quickly denied lest we appear to doubt God. And this is true especially now since all true believers await the coming of the Messiah, the greatest of all prophets. He has been promised to us by Him whose promises never fail. Who knows," father Joseph almost whispered, "but that he now lives and will very soon redeem God's chosen people?"

Things To Find Out.

1. Try to think of several benefits which a good main-travelled road brings to a town or community. Some of these benefits would be more and different kinds of people, greater knowledge of the world out-

side of one's own small community, and greater ease in travelling. There are many others.

Think of the western part of the United States before the railroads were built.

2. Why do we think it better to know all kinds of people and live on good terms with them? Is it because we can make more money in that way? Is it because we are helped by their ideas and beliefs?

3. What people were the greatest road builders of ancient times? Where may we find the best traces of the roads they built?

4. Who are some famous road builders of today? Who was Lieutenant Gallman and what people did he serve by building a wide smooth highway?

5. The prophets of Israel considered that they had in some way a special call to serve their people. Do people still feel that they are called to God's service?

6. If a boy or girl has a special talent or ability for doing some one thing unusually well, for example, singing or playing the violin, does that constitute a *call* of God to do that thing?

7. A vow is a sacred promise to oneself and God. Does it seem to you that a person has a right to make a vow regardless of how it affects others?

Find and read Judges 11:29-40.

8. What is hypnotism? Can a man hypnotize himself? When he is hypnotized is he any wiser than he was when he was fully conscious? You can't decide these questions fully but try to think about them and see if you don't come to the conclusion that most people need to use every power they have of reason, judg-

ment, self-control and knowledge in order to accomplish good for themselves and others.

9. Moses' experience is recorded in Exodus 3. Read the chapter.

Read Jeremiah 1:5-9 for his experience.

Read Isaiah 6:1-9 to learn about his call to service.

Read Acts 26:12-19. This tells you of Paul's call to service.

Things To Do.

On the model of Nazareth and its environment make the road. Examine some good map of Palestine and its surroundings and locate Damascus, the sea of Galilee, Capernaum and Ptolemais. Locate Nazareth in relation to these places.

Indicate the general direction of the road. Where was the Mediterranean Sea in relation to Nazareth? Make your road in width and length in proportion to the size of your town.

Place a caravan of camels, donkeys and men on your road. Try to think what the people in Nazareth would need that the caravan would bring. Did they send anything out to other communities?

The Story of Amos

"MANY hundred years ago there lived in our country a very brave, wise, good man called Amos."[1]

Rabbi ben Ezra and the little boy were alone together in the garden behind the synagogue. It was evening, not yet quite dark, and very cool and quiet in the garden. The little boy had come to the wise old teacher to tell him about the holy men he had seen at the fountain and to ask him to tell him more about them.

"My father Joseph says," he said to Rabbi ben Ezra, "that God has often spoken to His people through holy men. That we should listen to them with reverence and help them. But these at the fountain were very dirty and spoke no words we could understand."

"It is right that we listen with reverence," said Rabbi ben Ezra, "for the whole of Israel looks with longing for the coming of the greatest of all prophets and we know not the way nor the time of his coming."[2]

"Tell me of the great brave, wise Amos," said the little boy eagerly for he was afraid that Rabbi ben

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[1] *Time of Amos.* Amos' date in history was about 787 B.C. He ranks as one of the twelve minor or lesser prophets. The others are Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi.

[2] *The Messiah.* This is a reference to the universal expectation among the people of the coming of a Messiah or Saviour who should unite the people and save them from their enemies.

Ezra would get to dreaming of the great good to come and forget to tell the promised story.

"It is written in the book of the prophets,"[3] said Rabbi ben Ezra. "You may read it for yourself when you are a man. This man, Amos, was a countryman who had spent all of his life herding sheep and raising fruit to sell. He knew about the loneliness and danger of the hills and about the caves where lions and bears hid themselves. He knew also about the wide open spaces where the grass grew green and plentiful and the clear streams ran downward to the sea. He did not know the cities with their crowds of noisy people, their great palaces and their wickedness. He was very happy and good though he was so poor and lonely."[4]

"Like us," said the little boy softly.

"Lonelier and poorer even than we," said Rabbi ben Ezra. "But he was like us in this, that he thought a great deal about God and tried very hard to do right and be just and merciful and loving because he thought that that was what God wished men to do. When he was out in the fields plowing or watching his sheep he felt very near God. He sometimes even thought he heard God speaking to him. He had dreams and visions which he thought God sent to him. Then too, he knew all the history of our people and the laws of Moses, the same wise holy laws which we love and obey.

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[3] *Book of the Prophets.* Each prophet wrote or had a scribe write for him, his teachings and his special thought about God. Amos, perhaps, was one who had a scribe write for him.

[4] *Lonely.* This does not mean that Amos was a hermit and lived absolutely alone. It means only that his home was in some small village with his clan or family. He would go out each day from the village to work in the fields and return at night.

"Now, though Amos lived so quietly at Tekoa, caring for his flocks of sheep and goats, his fruit trees and his grapes, and managing to be very happy and honest and good though so very poor and unknown, a great many of the people of Israel were very wicked. Jereboam was the king of the ten of the twelve tribes.[5] These were called Israel. And Uzziah was the king of two tribes. These were called Judah. But they all seemed to have forgotten altogether about God. They were very rich and selfish. They fought in many cruel wars. They robbed the poor. They did not enforce the law. They forgot or neglected to go to church or to worship the one true living God of righteousness. True, the beautiful golden temple which King Solomon had built stood in Jerusalem and the priests offered sacrifices there. They talked about God. They pretended to be very good. They went through all the forms of worship on the Sabbath but in their daily living they stole and fought and cheated and wronged the poor and helpless ones.[6] There was one very wise merciful law which forbade anyone to take away a man's coat for debt.[7] Or at least, if it were taken away in the morning it must be restored to him by evening for his cloak was his bed and his covering. But if a man got in debt for ever so little they would strip him of his coat and turn him away pretending that the coat was needed for some sacred ceremony. They said that such need gave them the right to keep it. All of their religion was just a form or a wicked pretense. There was nothing honest or loving or unselfish about it.

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[5] *Jereboam.* After the death of Solomon the twelve tribes of Israel were divided into ten and two. Jereboam was the king of the ten tribes. The story of his life may be found in 1 Kings 11:28-31.

[6] *Treatment of the poor.* For the teachings of the law concerning the treatment of the poor, read Deuteronomy 15:7-9.

[7] *Return of a Pledge for Debt.* Read Exodus 22:26, 7.

"Out on his lonely hills. Amos did not come in contact with these people very much but when he went to the city[8] to sell his wool and his fruit he found out many things that shocked him. What he saw there of the way the people acted made him very unhappy. Of course there must have been a few good people who remembered God and tried to serve Him. These Amos talked with. But they were few and timid. They dared not speak out boldly for fear they would be thrown into prison or made slaves or even tortured and killed.

"But Amos was not afraid. At first he was very sad but slowly there grew up in his mind and heart a deep, fierce, burning resentment. Then he began to talk and nothing could stop him. Can't you imagine him striding up and down the streets with his shepherd's coat about him, a bronzed rugged countryman, very earnest, very unfashionable but very bold; stopping in the synagogue or market-place or at the meeting places by the gates, telling everybody that unless they stopped being wicked and idle and cruel and unjust that God would scatter them to the four winds of heaven and utterly wipe them out of His memory? He told them God would send fire to burn up their palaces and kill all their princes. He told them that He would send an earthquake to swallow them all alive. He threatened that God would send blasting and mildew and the palmer worm to destroy their grape vines and their olive trees. 'For God lives,' he declared. 'God lives and loves righteousness and unless you do right and believe in Him you shall altogether perish.' "[9]

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[8] *The City.* The city to which Amos went and saw so much wickedness might have been Jerusalem.

"Wasn't he afraid they would put him in prison or kill him?" asked the little boy.

"Amos was so excited, so full of passion," said Rabbi ben Ezra, "that he was in an ecstasy. He seemed even to be in a trance and the people feared to touch him. He was God's man. And though they could and did forget and neglect God at most times they were not quite sure what would happen if they hurt a holy man."

"Did Amos speak the truth, Rabbi?"

The old man's face was very sad. "Of those who heard Amos long ago only a few escaped. For their sins God scattered His people far and wide.[10] In distant lands they became slaves and prisoners. Gone were their kings, their wealth and their glory. Even the shining golden temple lay in ruins.[11] Yes, lad. The prophet spoke the truth."

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[9] *Amos' Message.* Read chapter eight of the book of Amos. A great American poet has summed up the message in these words:

"Nothing can be good in Him,
Which evil is in me."

[10] *Scattered.* These people were conquered and carried away into captivity by the Assyrians. They never again were a nation and are referred to even today as, "the lost tribes of Israel." Read II Kings 17:1-6.

[11] *Destruction.* The temple at Jerusalem was not destroyed for another hundred years; not until 586 B.C.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find if you can, where Tekoa is in Palestine. Using the scale of miles on the map, make an estimation of its distance from Jerusalem.

2. Have we men of today who are keenly alert to the wrongs that are going on in society? Who are some of these? Who is H. C. Mencken? Sherwood Eddy? Norman Thomas? Find out what these men are saying of our present day society.

3. This is a day of great wealth especially for people in the United States. Find out some way in which some very rich men are using their money for the benefit of others. What is the Rockefeller Foundation? The Carnegie Foundation? What are some of the things these great foundations are doing for education, for health, for research, for beautifying the world?

4. When Jesus was a man he said something about wealth and about the importance of getting money. What was it? Read Matthew 6:33 and Luke 12:22-31.

Things To Do.

1. Find on your map where Assyria was in relation to Palestine. In relation to Jerusalem.

2. Read in II Kings 17:1-6 about the Assyrians. Learn as much as you can about them. What kind of people were they? What did they do with the Jewish people after they had conquered them?

3. Work on your sand-table model of Nazareth to get it finished in every way.

Bands of Love

"I WILL tell you the story of another wise man,"[1] said Rabbi ben Ezra the next evening when he and the little boy sat on the roof of father Joseph's house and watched the stars beginning to show in the deep blue sky above them.

"This man lived about twenty-five years later than Amos but he had spent all of his life in the city of Jerusalem near the Temple where he could hear the silver trumpets' call to prayer and the slow chant of the singers as they marched in their white robes up to the morning service.

"He so loved the great Temple that he attended all of its services. Night and morning he knelt while the priests offered the sacrifices and joined in the prayers and songs and listened to the readings of the sacred law. He felt that he knew and loved God. He was called Hosea."

"Was he very old and wise that he liked so much to go to the Temple?" asked the little boy.

"He was not old at all, lad. He was young and strong and good looking but he was wise with the wisdom of a keen mind and a loving heart and because of this he could see, as the countryman Amos had seen before him, that there was a great deal of wickedness going on in spite of the fact that the services went on in the Temple.

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[1] *Another Holy Man.* This was Hosea. He lived about the same time as Amos but wrote some ten years later than Amos. The date given for Hosea is 785 B.C.

"But he didn't realize this very deeply until he was very unhappy. One day when Hosea went up to the Temple to the morning service he saw a very beautiful young woman who lived in the Temple.[2] She was young and slender with soft dark eyes and dark hair that curled about her white shoulders and a happy, kind smile on her beautiful lips. She wore a white dress and golden sandals and joined in the dance of the sacred music. Her name was Gomer.

"Hosea saw her and fell in love with her. At first he hardly dared hope that she would love him in return and marry him but at last, after he had told her of his love and the home that he could make for her and after he had paid a sum of money to the Temple because he was taking her away from its service, they were married.

"For a while they lived happily. A little son was born to them and they called him Jazreel. How happy Hosea was! He felt that his love for Gomer and their little son was like the love God felt for His people,[3]

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[2] *Women in the Temple Service.* It is thought that women were connected with the temple rites of worship. Many women were so employed. These were dedicated to the Temple. They belonged to it in a special manner and that is why Hosea had to pay a sum of money to the Temple when he took Gomer away.

[3] *God's Love.* Of God's love Hosea says,

"I will heal their backsliding.
I will love them freely.
Mine anger is turned away from him.
I will be as the dew unto Israel.
He shall grow as the lily

Israel. Because he loved he could better understand God's love.

"Hosea was the first of the prophets or great teachers of old times, to think and talk of God's loving His people. Other teachers, like Amos, had said that God was righteous and just; that He was powerful and wonderful; that He was jealous of other Gods; that He would take vengeance on those who forgot to worship Him but no great teacher had ever told of God's loving care and tender guidance as Hosea did.

"Then a dreadful thing happened. Gomer, who had seemed so loving and true, grew tired of her home and her little son and her husband. She no longer loved Hosea and she did love some one else. But though all happiness had gone from his heart and his home was broken, Hosea went right on loving Gomer. He knew she was not true to him but he couldn't help loving her.

"Perhaps because he was so unhappy himself, because the one he loved no longer cared for him, he could understand how God felt when the people He loved best no longer seemed to love Him. In a dream or vision Hosea heard God saying, 'When Israel was a child then I loved him. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. My people shall suffer because of their sins but I will never forsake them. For

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And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
His branches shall spread.
His beauty shall be as the olive tree,
And his smell as Lebanon."

See Hosea 14:4-9.

I am God and not man. The holy One in the midst of thee.' "[4]

"Does it make God sorry when we do wrong?" asked the little boy.

"As sorry as your mother is when you do wrong," answered the old man. "Because God is as loving as a mother."

After this they sat silent for a long time. The night had grown very dark. It was very still. Over them there blazed ten thousand, thousand stars. They seemed to bring God very near.

"Do you think," asked the little boy, "that God still lives and loves us?"

"The God of our fathers," answered the old man, "is our God. He has said, 'I am the Lord. I change not.' He still draws us with bands of love."[5]

Things To Find Out.

1. See if you can think how living in a large city makes men feel differently from the way they who live alone in some very small village think. Do country people have more time to think quietly? Do they have less temptation to do wrong? Do city people see so much that is wrong that they grow careless of wrongdoing?

2. Hosea said that God would draw His people with bands of love. Go to a machine shop or a factory and watch the machinery in action. Do you see many leather belts between the wheels, uniting them? These

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[4] *Ephraim.* This is a symbolic name for Israel. Read Hosea 11:1-9.

[5] *God is the same.* "For I am the Lord. I change not." Malachi 3:6.

are bands. Without them no power would be transmitted. Then think about this story and think of God's love as a band that unites men to Him.

One of these bands is *faith.* That is belief in God's goodness. One of them is *hope.* That is belief that goodness will come to us from God.

Can you think of other bands between God and man?

Things To Do.

1. When you have finished your model of Jesus' home in Nazareth you should have his home, the courtyard and the carpenter's shop; the street running from the road in the valley to the brow of the hill; the fountain and the market-place; the synagogue and its garden; some of the other shops and some of the fields.

You should have some figures of people, father Joseph, mother, the little boy and his two brothers, Ruth and Dinah, Rabbi ben Ezra and any other people you care to make.

You should have some animals, Be Be and her babies, Dochi, some flocks of sheep and goats, some camels and donkeys and some dogs.

Now make some trees and vineyards and some grassy fields. Make different kinds of trees. Perhaps a whole olive orchard outside the town would be a good thing to make. Terrace your hill with stones in order to make a small level space for your vineyard.

Finish all this work about the place, leaving a wide clear spot near the fountain, for when this part of the work is done you can do something more with your people that will be very interesting.

The Caravan

THEY knew that it was coming even before they could see the small gray donkeys that led the way, for dust rose high over the valley and rolled in a white cloud before it. The word passed from mouth to mouth, from Belim, the water carrier, to Rabbi ben Ezra himself, "A caravan is coming! A caravan!"[1]

Long before the first great heavily loaded camels could be seen a crowd had gathered in the market-place by the fountain, a crowd full of the happiest excitement and the keenest interest.

Menassah, the merchant[2] was there. He had left the shop in his wife's care and had come hurriedly to the market-place for he was expecting the master of the caravan to bring him some dyed linen from Damascus which he hoped to sell at a profit. It might be that it would be in this caravan.

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[1] *Commerce.* All of the commerce of this time, except that which was carried on by ships, was conducted by caravans. The camel was the only creature which could cross the great desert that lay between Palestine and the cities of Persia and India to the east and between Palestine and Egypt to the south. This commerce consisted of imports and exports. The people of Palestine imported wood, metal and precious stones; dyed and embroidered linen and linen yarn, tools, arms, furniture, rugs, veils, dresses, and robes; and spices, drugs and rare perfumes. There was also a traffic in slaves, wine, beer and opiums. They exported wheat, oil, balsam, honey, wool and figs.

[2] *Merchants.* The Jews loved commerce and seemed to have a peculiar talent for it. It meant to them wealth and influence. It was a favorite occupation of theirs in the time of Solomon. See I Kings 10:28, 29, and II Chronicles 1:16.

For the Jewish laws regarding commerce see Leviticus 25:36, 37. These have to do with the command against taking usury and the observance of a Jubilee year. Both of which made success in business difficult.

Phillip, the stock dealer, was there with a few young camels and donkeys which he hoped to sell to the master of the caravan should he happen to need any to replace those that were sick or too tired to go on to the journey's end.

Most of the men and women of Nazareth were there on one pretext or another and all of the boys and girls of Nazareth were there on no pretext at all except that they were eager and anxious to see and hear all that went on.

It was a great event when a long, dusty, heavily loaded caravan, that had started from the far-off wonderful city of Damascus and was going, no one knew exactly where but to some place that was strange and alluring, came through their small town.

The little boy, Joshua, was there, waiting with the others to see and hear and learn of strange people and places and far-off lands. He knew, because his father and mother and Rabbi ben Ezra had told him, that the Jews, his own people, were the most important people in the world, the ones chosen of God to teach and lead all other people.[3] And yet he could not help but be curious and interested in other people. It might be possible, he sometimes thought, that God would be great enough and loving enough to care for all other people as He had cared for His chosen ones. Though of this thought he said nothing.

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[3] *God's Chosen People.* This belief became so deeply rooted in the Jewish mind as to form a superiority complex, a condition which has been deeply resented by all other peoples and which has caused much of the race persecution throughout history of which the Jewish people so bitterly complain.

But it was in his mind as he waited with the noisy happy crowd this clear warm morning in Nazareth for the great slow train of camels as it plodded through the dust over the narrow, winding, trail-like road.

While the crowd at Nazareth grew larger and noisier by the moment, the people of the caravan toiled slowly forward. They were tired and dusty and thirsty. If the whole of little Nazareth had come out to see them go by they would not have cared. That it was hot, that the road was rough, that they had still many days of travel before them before they could have rest and that they had been attacked by robbers[4] and three of their best camels killed, their loads scattered and much valuable goods lost, troubled them greatly. Had it not been for this it is probable that they would never have dreamed of stopping in such a poor little town as Nazareth.

But when at last the master of the caravan, from the high saddle of his swift camel saw the low houses on the green hillside, the happy expectant crowd of people, and best of all, the herd of young camels and donkeys which Phillip had brought to sell, he decided at once to stop. Leaning forward he thrust his great spear into the earth and at this signal the whole caravan formed itself in a circle about him and came to a standstill.

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[4] *Robbers.* Palestine at this time was infested by organized bands of robbers who lived in the caves in the hills. These were particularly numerous on the roads near Jerusalem. See Luke 10:30.

With terrible groans and moans the camels sank to their knees and their riders climbed stiffly down. If there had been noise and confusion before, in the market-place there was babble now, for the dogs barked, the camel drivers shouted shrilly, boys ran here and there yelling and laughing, and everyone was talking and explaining without waiting to listen to what anyone else might have to say.

Because he spoke Greek the small town folk of Nazareth had not at first understood what the master of the caravan wanted but finally Jason, the tanner, who was himself a Greek, who lived on the far side of the hill was sent for and when he came running and panting for breath he repeated in Aramaic[5] the news of the robbery and the wish of the master to buy three camels.

"Three young, well-trained, strong camels are wanted," repeated Jason, and Phillip, the dealer in such beasts, was pushed forward. From his high place on the hillside Joshua heard all that was said and saw all that went on.

"It was very early in the morning just as it was beginning to be light that we were attacked by robbers," the master said in his queer language.

"It was early in the morning," Jason repeated in Aramaic to the listening Phillip and the people. "Very early. This morning. Robbers!" the people repeated to each other.

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[5] *Aramaic.* This was the language Jesus spoke. It is a dialect. Only the highly educated Jews spoke Hebrew. Even the Hebrew scripture, read each Sabbath in the synagogues, had to be translated for the hearers. The Greek language was, however, in rather common use owing to the fact that so many Greeks lived in Palestine.

"They were mounted on swift horses. They were armed with stones and slings, with knives and long spears."

"Armed men on swift horses," Jason repeated. And a whisper ran through the crowd. Joshua heard it.

"Thou shalt not kill or steal." Was not that the law[6] as Rabbi ben Ezra had taught him? Perhaps these queer foreign speaking people of the caravan and the bold robbers, hidden now in the hills, had never heard of the law that God Himself had given to the Jews, His chosen people. How queer they were and how dirty and repulsive. No doubt they would eat without washing.[7] They might even eat swine's flesh and be utterly defiled.[8] See how the Pharisees held their garments close about them to keep from being touched by anything unholy. And such talking! Why, it sounded so outlandish. It was funny to hear.

The people all about the little boy were laughing at the strange people of the caravan. Joshua could not help but hear, but he did not join in the laughing. A man near him called out, "Make him pay well for your camels, Phillip. His need is great and he has much gold."

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[6] *The Law.* This refers to the Mosaic law as recorded in Ex. 20:13, 15.

[7] *Washing.* The Jewish law demanded such numerous washings for ceremonial cleanliness that they were perhaps the cleanest of Oriental peoples.

[8] *Swine's Flesh.* See Leviticus 11:7. The Jew could lawfully eat only such animals as parted the hoof and chewed the cud. See Leviticus 11:3. He seemed particularly averse to the flesh of the hog. They would not even pronounce the name but called it "that beast or that thing." Though hogs were bred in Palestine in Jesus' time he shared the common dislike for them. See Mark 5:13.

It seemed from all Joshua could hear of the bargaining that the master had made Phillip an offer for three young camels of eighteen dollars apiece.[9] That was a fair price as they all well knew, more even than Phillip had expected to get. But the master had been long delayed and was eager to get on his way so was willing to pay more than he might have to pay in some markets.

But Phillip had named as his price thirty dollars each for the three and would not change. "Thirty dollars," he cried, tearing at his long beard and beating his breast. "Thirty dollars they are worth to me. Should I make you a gift of good camels? Would you have me cheat my helpless little ones or make them to say when they are men, 'my father was feeble-minded?' "

"No camel of my caravan, even yonder racer, has cost me more than eighteen dollars, you Jewish thief," answered the master. "And these camels you offer me are young, unseasoned stock. How do I know that they can endure the hardships of the roads? Yet because I must have fresh stock to replace those killed, I will give you twenty dollars each for the three."

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[9] *Price of Camels.* The price of camels here mentioned is estimated from the prevailing prices of other animals as mentioned by Edersheim in "The Life and Times of Jesus." A goat was worth about one dollar and fifty cents in our money. A sheep, about three dollars, and an ox about twelve dollars. A horse was worth a little more than an ox. Perhaps then, a good camel would easily be worth eighteen dollars. Meat was about a penny a pound. An unskilled laborer got paid about fifteen cents a day. It is said that the great Rabbi Hillel supported his family on less than four cents a day.

When this was translated to Phillip he pretended to go into a faint and staggered about as though hardly able to speak in reply. But seeing the master turn away as though to mount his camel without buying, he suddenly recovered and shouted, "You call me a thief of a Jew. It is you who are a lying, louse-picking dog of a Greek to offer me twenty dollars for my pets, my children of the hills, my life!" And he ran and threw his arms about the neck of the nearest camel and wept and howled. "Thirty dollars!" he cried. "Not a penny less!"

All about the two, the people listened intently; the Jewish people of Nazareth, the ragged sun-burned people of the caravan and the little boy Joshua, his clear eyes full of understanding. His heart was torn with pity for the master who had been robbed and wounded, whose need was so great, and Phillip, his neighbor, and fellow-Jew, who also had need, though by no means such dire need as he said, to sell his camels for a good price. His understanding was big enough for them both though one was a Gentile.

Suddenly the clamor that had arisen when Phillip had so dramatically hugged his camel died down, for the master had drawn from his girdle a purse and the clink of gold pieces being counted out could be heard even on the outskirts of the crowd. One, two, three, shining gold pieces he drew from his purse and clinked them together in his hands.

"Twenty dollars each for three young camels is a generous price. A fair deal." Tossing them lightly in Phillip's direction the master said, "Loose the three beasts." And to his servants, "See that they are loaded in such fashion that all are equally burdened. Be ready in haste. We are already delayed beyond our time by these swine-hating Hebrew peasants." There was a sting in his words like a whip lash.

Phillip, scrambling in the dust for one of the gold pieces which he had failed to catch, laughed to himself. He had never expected to get so much for his camels. He had driven a shrewd bargain and he patted with glee the place in his girdle where the gold pieces lay hidden.

Soon the long caravan got under way; the camels groaning and complaining, the drivers shouting and prodding them with sharp goads, their loads swaying. Again the dust rose in clouds, only now it rested over the trail to the southwest and was soon lost to sight. Once more the air was still and clear, the sky full of a blinding heat and light. Slowly the people went about their tasks. The women with their water jars lingered to talk over what they had seen. The flies swarmed again on the food in the market. The dogs crept into shady places to sleep, the sound of hammers and saws in the shops could be heard as the men went back to work. The sleepy little town of Nazareth was again undisturbed. Only the little boy, Joshua, helping his father with hammer and plane to shape the curve of a wheel, was thoughtful. What troubled him was not so clear that he could put it into a question to father Joseph, or even to Rabbi ben Ezra but it was a feeling, a wonder too vague for words. Were other people, not Jews, important? And how should they be treated?

He remembered the sly look of satisfaction in Phillip's eyes as he caught the gold pieces. He remembered too the scorn in the eyes of the master of the caravan and the spiteful words, "these swine-hating Hebrew peasants." The caravan had gone away into the great wide unknown world so full of mystery. Would the time come when he too would go away to some greater world full of all kinds of people? What was the right way to treat all these queer different people of the world?

That evening when he talked with Rabbi ben Ezra he tried to tell him how he felt but could not find the right words. He could only ask, "Are our people, the Jews, the only people God loves or cares for?"

Not quite understanding, the kind old teacher said, "God has chosen us a special people to teach all the people of the world of Himself. Our wisest teachers have told us of One who is to come, a great Redeemer, who will be sent, first to us and through us to all the world. The prophet Isaiah has said, "I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles and set up my standard to the people. And they shall bring thy sons in their arms and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders."[10]

"God then did know about all people," Joshua thought. He could be trusted to care lovingly for everyone.

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[10] *Other Peoples.* It is hard to find in the Old Testament any evidence that people other than the Jews would receive any consideration at God's hands. Perhaps Isaiah 49:22 is the best that can be found.

For Jesus' conception of his duty to others read Mark 16:15.

Things To Find Out.

1. In Jesus' time the commerce of the world was carried on by means of peddlers, caravans and ships. Think of as many ways as you can in which commerce is carried on today. It is carried on by vastly larger, more powerful and more numerous ships; by trains and automobile trucks and by airplanes. Is there a corner of the globe which is not reached?

2. What are some of the ways in which people are benefited by this commerce? Some of them are more and better things to eat, and wear. What are some other ways?

3. Do we treat other people better and more fairly because we need what they have to sell?

4. Name some of the leading commercial powers of the world. Is the United States among these?

5. Is this dependence, this mutual service of give and take, a mark of progress? What Christian quality of character makes it possible?

6. Find out about how many races of people there are in the world. How many languages? If one race is superior to another what makes it so? Is it wealth, power, education, color, language, religion, accomplishments in the arts, in invention, or in any other line? Find out one quality that makes a man or woman of superior value. Is it something each one could attain for himself?

Find Mark 16:15 and read it if you want to know what Jesus thought about God's love for all peoples.

Things To Do.

1. Make a caravan and place it on the road coming into Nazareth from Damascus.

Find some pictures of camels. Note how they are loaded. What kind of harness do they wear for an ordinary load?

What kind of saddles do they wear when men ride them? What kind of bridles?

2. Make the figure of the master of the caravan. Make his costume so that his rank as master is shown.

Show how the men of the caravan dressed.

3. Show on your sand-table model where the Sea of Galilee is in relation to Nazareth. Where Damascus is. Where Ptolemais is.

A Springtime Feast

It was spring.[1] Gone were the dark chilly days when the rain came down so steadily; when the cold numbed one's fingers and nipped his toes. Now the sun shone all day long. The birds sang in the blossoming trees as they built their nests. The water in the brooks sang as it flowed swiftly away to the valleys. Even father Joseph's little boys, Joshua and James and Joses sang as they played in the sunshine. This is the song they sang:

> "For lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone.
> The singing of birds is heard in the land."

They laughed together as they sang for they had a secret. This was the secret. Out on the terraced hillside stood an old, old watchtower of stone.[2] And in the tower lived an old, old man named Kedar. The little boy had seen him often when he had gone with the shepherds to the fields. It was he who told the others and planned the secret.

"You see," he said in telling about it, "this old man is very lonely and poor. When he walks he only creeps along, his legs tremble so much. Sometimes the men of the vineyard pay him a very little for scaring away the birds but the clever, bold fox who got in the vineyard might scare him to death by barking at him, he is so old and bent. Now tomorrow, when everyone is giving gifts to everyone else, why shouldn't we take a gift to him?"

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[1] *Spring*. The month of Adar, corresponds to our February and March. It is early spring in Palestine.

[2] *Watchtowers*. These were small huts of stone built with or without cement, in the vineyards. While the grapes were ripening a watchman must live in the tower to scare away the birds and the smaller wild animals. In Canticles 2:15 is a reference to "the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines."

"Just we by ourselves?" asked James. He was always eager to do what the little boy suggested but this time he sounded a little doubtful. "We haven't any money to buy things and if we asked mother to help us then it wouldn't be our gift."

"Well," said Joshua slowly, "Mother would help us of course but it would be wonderful to do it all alone. You see," he went on, "tomorrow is a feast day, the Feast of Purim,[3] when everyone gives gifts and is happy. I'm afraid no one will remember to give the poor old watchman a gift unless we do. Mother is getting her gifts ready I know. She has a basket of cakes and figs for poor Meanesse of the cliffs and a jar of oil for the weaver who sits all day in his dark weaving room. Now what could we take or do for poor Kedar?"

The two little boys thought earnestly while the baby, Joses, tumbled about in the sunshine. Joshua drew his straight brows into a straighter line and thought and thought. Then he jumped up laughing.

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[3] *The Feast of Purim.* This feast took place on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar. It followed a fast in commemoration of Esther. But the feast was in commemoration of the saving of the Jews by Mordecai and Esther in the year 521 B.C. It corresponds in some ways to our feast of Thanksgiving, differing only in the practice of giving gifts to friends and the poor. There was first a service of worship in the synagogue, then music and dancing and feasting combined with the giving of gifts to friends and the poor. See Esther 9:22.

"I'll tell you," he cried. "I know what we can do. We can go to the fields and carry in for him a great bundle of wood,[4] enough to last him, oh, for weeks. That's what we can do. Ruth and Dinah will take us with them when they go. Then when Kedar is asleep this evening we will creep up softly and stack it by his door. We will fill his water jars too, and I will take him the egg my white hen laid today. Then he will have wood and water to last him a long time, and a fresh egg for his breakfast. Oh, that will make him happy! He need never know who gave it to him and so feel that he owes us anything."[5]

So that was the secret the three little boys were laughing over. Mother heard them and came to the door and smiled. She was busy getting ready for the feast days when there would be company from far and near.[6] It would be one of the happiest times of all their happy year when there would be a service in the synagogue, then singing and dancing and thanksgiving; when everyone would give gifts to the poor[7] and send choice dainties to their friends. This was all in memory of a happy time when a brave, beautiful queen saved the lives of thousands of her people and brought honor and glory to the Jews. The telling of that glorious story was a part of the happiness of the feast and no one told it so well as father Joseph.[8] So it was he who told it over and over until everyone knew it by heart. Even the little boys knew it so well that they knew just when to make a great rattle with mallets and sticks of wood and the men knew it so well that they knew just when to shout, "blessed be Mordecai!" or "cursed be Zoresh!" or "blessed be Esther!" and "cursed be all idolaters!" and "blessed be Harbonah who hanged Haman!" This was the story as father Joseph told it in his deep, kind voice.

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[4] *Bringing in Wood.* This was the work of the women. The wood brought in from outside the town was for fuel in cooking. It probably was small sticks of brush and grass bound in bundles and carried on the head. Jesus speaks of grass as a fuel. Matthew 6:30. This grass was possibly the heavier stalks of lilies and reeds which grew thickly in Palestine.

[5] *Secret Giving.* For Jesus' later teachings regarding the manner of giving, see Matthew 6:1-4.

[6] *Company.* These were a most hospitable people and the feast days meant the gathering of clans and tribes and special meetings of the family, which as a social unit, was emerging from the clan.

[7] *Gifts to the Poor.* The child Jesus would be taught most carefully

"More than four hundred years ago[9] there lived in the East a great king named Ahasuerus. His kingdom extended from India to Ethiopia and his rule was over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces." That was the way it began. The little boy had heard it many times.

"The name of the king's palace was Shushan. Its

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regarding his duty to give to and care for the poor among his own people. The law concerning this was definite. For the law concerning the giving of one tenth or a tithe of the whole income, see Leviticus 27:30 and Genesis 28:22, and also Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

For the law concerning the release of debtors on the seventh year, see Deuteronomy 15:1-3.

For the law of the release of Hebrew slaves, see Exodus 21:2-6.

For the law of the release of the land from cultivation once in seven years, see Exodus 23:10, 11.

For the law concerning gleaning that there might be grain left for the poor, see Leviticus 19:9, 10.

[8] *The Story of Esther.* It was told in the synagogue service and also told to children by parents and teachers.

[9] *The Date of Esther.* B.C. 521. See Esther 1:1-4.

walls were of marble and gold. There were white, green and blue hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The beds were of gold and silver upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble. The name of the Queen of this glorious king was Vashti. She was fair to look upon. As beautiful and good as King Ahasuerus was great and powerful.

"Now it happened that at the close of the feast, when the king had drunken much wine, he commanded that his lovely Queen Vashti should appear before all his drinking friends and comrades of the banquet room that they all might see how beautiful she was. Though she knew quite well that to disobey the king meant some most serious punishment, possibly death, Queen Vashti sent word that she would not do this and King Ahasuerus, humiliated and angered to think that anyone would refuse to obey him, banished her from his kingdom, and confiscated all her wealth. Then he set about searching for another beautiful woman to become his queen.[10]

"Now there lived in the king's provinces great numbers of Jews who had been brought there as captives of war from their own country of Palestine. Among these Jews was one called Mordecai. Mordecai had a lovely young adopted daughter called Esther. She was so beautiful and good, so obedient and charming in every way that Mordecai thought she might please the king and thus become queen, so he sent her to the palace. But because he feared that if it were known that she was a Jewess, the haughty people of the court would refuse to see her, he required her to give a promise that she would never tell that she was a Jewess or mention that she was in any way related to Mordecai.

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[10] *The King's Power.* King Ahasuerus was an absolute monarch. That is, he had the power of life or death over his subjects. As a husband he wished also to have the absolute control of his wife. Esther 1:20.

"Though King Ahasuerus had hundreds of beautiful girls from which to choose he found Esther to be the loveliest, most charming of them all. So he set a royal crown upon her head and she became queen.

"All this pleased Mordecai immensely, and, though he still feared to have it known that Queen Esther was a Jew's daughter, he did stay near the palace gate to see what might happen. One day while he was sitting there he overheard two men plotting to kill the king and he had the two men hanged. But Esther had not dared to say that it was Mordecai, the Jew, who had saved the king's life.

"There was in the king's court a man called Haman whom the king honored above all others. That others should honor him also the king gave orders that everyone should bow down before Haman to show him reverence. This everyone did, bowing low before the crafty Haman repeating, 'Haman, Haman. Long live Haman!' That is, everyone did this but Mordecai. He hated Haman and utterly refused to bow down to him. He even pretended not to see him when they met on the street.

"Of course this made Haman furiously angry. There seemed no good reason why this Jew should not honor

Haman as others did. In his anger and chagrin Haman planned to kill Mordecai, and not Mordecai alone but all the Jewish people in all the king's dominion. He hated to go to the king and say, 'Here is one insignificant Jew who will not bow down to me. Please kill him.' So he went instead to the king and said, 'The Jews throughout your kingdom are very wicked. If you will allow me to do so I will have them all put to death and in addition I will contribute to the king's treasury ten thousand talents of silver.'[11] The king, knowing that the Jews were captives taken in war, and needing also the great sum of money that Haman offered to give, gave his consent and the decree went forth through all the provinces that every Jew was to be put to death.

"Now Mordecai was in real trouble. So he tore his clothing. He put on sackcloth. He threw ashes over his head[12] and he went up and down the streets crying loudly and bitterly. Queen Esther heard him and sent to ask why he cried so bitterly.

"In answer he sent her a copy of the decree that every Jew in the kingdom should be put to death. 'This means you too, oh, Queen,' he said. 'But go now to the king and plead with him for the lives of your countrymen.'

"Queen Esther said, 'You know well that it is forbidden under pain of death for anyone to go unbidden before the king. And King Ahasuerus has not sent for me for a month. Nevertheless to save my people I shall go to him. And if I perish, I perish.'

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[11] *Ten Thousand Talents.* This would be in our money, approximately $7,900,000. The talent was 158 pounds English money.

[12] *Sackcloth and Ashes.* To rend or tear the garments, to put on sackcloth and either sit in ashes or throw them over the head, were signs of mourning.

"But when King Ahasuerus saw his lovely queen standing in the palace court, he held out to her his royal scepter in token of forgiveness and promised to grant her wish even if it meant giving her half of his kingdom.

"Then she told him how Haman had plotted to destroy the Jews. How her father had saved the king's life and how she herself was a loyal Jewess. And the king, loving her courage, her beauty and loyalty, sent forthwith for Mordecai, gave him a royal robe, put a golden crown on his head and sent him on horseback through the streets of the city. But Haman, he ordered hanged on the very gallows Haman had built for Mordecai.

"Then Esther reigned long in the land of King Ahasuerus. But Mordecai, the Jew, was next unto King Ahasuerus and great among the Jews and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his seed."

So came the end of the story, after that came the gifts, the dancing and music and feasting. In his little tumbled-down watchtower among the grape vines, poor old Kedar found wood piled neatly close to his door. He found his water jars full of fresh water. He found a fresh egg in a nest of green grass on his doorstep and he was very happy. But who had done all this he never knew.

Things To Find Out.

1. What feast, which we celebrate each year, is somewhat like the feast of Purim?

2. Read all of the references given under note seven and learn how the Jews cared for their poor. Then find out all you can about our charity organizations. What is a community chest? By what means is money supplied for County Homes, for Poorhouses, for Orphans' Homes, for Insane Asylums and Homes for old men and women?

What do you think of our way of caring for the poor as compared with the Jewish way?

3. Read the reference given in note five. Jesus' thought here was to warn people not to give for the sake of public approval but to give for the love of goodness or God. Is that why we give so much money to the poor nowadays?

4. A great poet has said,

> "Who gives himself with his gifts feeds three,
> Himself, his hungry neighbor and *Me.*"

What does it means to "give yourself," with your gift?

5. This story gives a vivid picture of what we call government by an absolute monarch. What do we mean by that? Are there any such in the world today?

A feeling has developed among almost all people today that each person has a right to a voice in his own government; that no ruler has a right to control absolutely another person. Did Jesus say or do anything when he was a man that would encourage this idea? Did his idea of loving service to all kinds of people mean that he thought them all of worth and value and not therefore to be wronged or cheated or unjustly treated?

Things To Do.

1. Write a play about the little boys and their gifts to Kedar. There will need to be three acts in the play. In the first act the three little boys will be talking together, planning what they can do for Kedar. In the second act they will go to the fields with Ruth and Dinah and bring in the wood and pile it near Kedar's door. In the last act Kedar will discover the gifts.

2. Write some music for the verse,

> "For lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone.
> The singing of birds is heard in the land."

Sing the song to the tune you have made for it.

3. If you would rather do so, dramatize the story of Esther. An opera has been written which is based on this story. You can ask some musician to help you to select parts of the music to learn and sing if you wish to do so.

More of the World Comes In

INTO the little carpenter's shop with its saws and hammers and planes, smelling of fresh new lumber, there came many kinds of people on many errands.

All of the rich and educated Jewish people who lived in the cities, or even in other parts of Palestine, despised and made fun of Nazareth for no better reason, perhaps, than that it was small and poor and out of the way. There was a saying among outsiders like this, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"[1] It was always said with a smile and a wise shrug as though to say, "Of course not. Why expect any?"

And yet life in Nazareth went on much as it did in other places. Caravans from far-off places passed through and sometimes stopped for water or food; travellers on foot or on donkey or camel often stopped and quite often there came peddlers, story-tellers or teachers with their small group of followers who would stop over night and talk with anyone who was interested in what they had to say. In fact there was a guest-room[2] in Nazareth, a room furnished and kept clean and attractive for the chance traveller. If a guest came the whole of little Nazareth was likely to stand around and gossip and watch and listen to all that went on in the hope that something might be learned or, perhaps, out of pure curiosity.

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[1] *Good Out of Nazareth.* For the prevailing opinion see John 1:45, 46.

[2] *Guest-Room or Chamber.* Hospitality was considered a great privilege and duty. See Mark 14:14.

It was not only the merchants with their caravans that stopped for help, sometimes it was a troop of soldiers returning from some service on the borders or in foreign lands; sometimes it was a Roman officer riding horseback or camelback or driving three horses abreast to a war chariot. Sometimes a wheel was broken on the rocky road or a saddle must be mended. Then a carpenter was needed and the owner of the wheel or saddle came to father Joseph's shop. The little boy Joshua, had a fine chance to see and hear all that went on for he could stand close to father Joseph and hand him a tool now and then.

Once, the little boy remembered when he was a man, it was a poor Jewish man who came with a broken yoke complaining bitterly that he had been robbed and beaten by tax-collectors[3] who had overtaken him and, declaring that their horses needed fodder, had taken all that he had and left him beaten and half dead by the road side.

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[3] *Tax Collectors or Publicans.* The Jews, as a subject nation, paid enormous taxes to the Romans. These taxes were collected in no fair or decent fashion but were a constant source of brawls and conflict. They were systematic, cruel, relentless and utterly regardless of any weakness or inability to pay. The tax was of two kinds, poll tax, and land or ground tax. Every woman over twelve and every man over fourteen paid a poll tax. Land was subject to tax of one tenth of all grain and one fifth of all wine and oil and fruit. There was bridge tax, road tax and duty on all that was bought and sold.

The privilege of collecting these taxes was sold at auction. The persons who bought the right were called Publicans. The Publican collected as much tax as he could. All over and above the legal rate

"They said," cried the man, wiping the blood and dust from his face with his arm, "that a dog of a Jew is fit to be kicked, and they struck me with my own ox-yoke rather than touch me with their hands."

"Did you not tell them," cried father Joseph, "that you had already paid your full tax to Caesar and that nothing more was due the government from you for another year?"

"What cared they for what I could say or for what is just and right? God smite them," he cried fiercely, lifting his clenched hands. "God curse——."

"Speak not of God's vengeance in this place," father Joseph said sternly, glancing at the little boy. "Run, lad, and tell your mother that one is here who needs her balsams and healing lotions and stay you with the little ones while she comes to this poor man's help. He has been cruelly treated and needs pity and care."

Joshua ran quickly, glad to escape to the sweet peace of the little house, from the sight of the angry, bloodstained man whom the arrogant Publicans had beaten and robbed. Later, when the man was sleeping, father Joseph told him some things that helped him to understand and filled his heart with a great longing

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was kept by the Publican. Publicans got rich quickly for the poor man had little or no redress at law and could be sent to prison for debt. The Publicans were thoroughly hated by the Jews and were classed by them with highwaymen and murderers. Selling out the privilege of collecting the taxes was called "farming the revenue." That the Romans lived in such luxury was made possible by the labor and sacrifice, even the lives of thousands upon thousands of Jewish people. How terribly people could be punished for debt appears in Matthew 18:28-30. How democratic and understanding Jesus was in his relations to people appears from the fact that he chose Matthew Levi, a tax collector, as one of his disciples. Luke 5:27-9.

and desire to help all men everywhere to be merciful and just.

"We, I mean the Jews, my boy," father Joseph had said, "are ruled by the Romans. There was a time, hundreds of years ago, when we lived happily in this beautiful country and were ruled by our own kings.[4] The country was ours. But we were too few and too weak, too quarrelsome and proud, too wicked and forgetful of God if the truth were told, to resist our enemies and they swept down on us from the north in all the savagery of cruel warfare and carried away our people into slavery. That was but the beginning of our troubles. First came the Assyrians,[5] those bold, fierce, fighting men who plundered our cities and drove before them like cattle our bravest and best men and women. Less than half of our people remained in their own country. Then, as if God had altogether forgotten us, came the Persians[6] who, having conquered the Assyrians, our conquerors, destroyed our sacred city of Jerusalem and the Temple and drove before them into captivity all whom the Assyrians had left.

"It is a sorrowful story. Perhaps you would rather not know it," said father Joseph, seeing the little boy's wide eyes fill with tears and his lips tremble.

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[4] *Their Own Kings.* These were Saul, David, and Solomon. After Solomon the kingdom was divided but ruled by Jewish kings until the year 842 B.C. when the northern kingdom, or Israel, was conquered by the Assyrians.

[5] *The Assyrians.* These were a great warlike nation living north of Palestine.

[6] *The Persians.* The Persians lived east of Palestine. They conquered Judah, or the two remaining tribes, and destroyed the Temple in the year 586 B.C.

"No, no! Tell me all!" he cried. "They are my people. I must know how to understand."

"The Persians were kinder to us than the Assyrians had been," father Joseph went on. "True, we were slaves and they exacted labor and tribute from us but after a long time some of our most loyal people were allowed to come back and begin to rebuild the Temple and the wall about Jerusalem.[7] All might have gone well had not the Greeks[8] under Alexander the Great, conquered the Persians in battles more than three hundred years ago and so become our masters."

Joshua listened to his father without a word but with such quiet intentness that he seemed to understand not just the words but all that the terrors of such merciless warfare had meant to his people. But his face was pale and his eyes shone with tears. When father Joseph paused he cried, "What then, are we still slaves?"

"The Greeks permitted us to live in our own land but exacted from us such tribute in money and labor that we were helpless. They did worse even than that. They tried by every means in their power to destroy our faith in God and compel us to worship their gods. They even placed a statue of their god, Jupiter, before the most holy altar of the living God in our Temple and compelled men and women to bow down to it and worship it. In this terrible trouble God helped us for He raised up a courageous Jew to defy the Greeks. This was Mattathias.[9] He utterly refused to worship Jupiter and, together with his five brave sons, escaped to the hills and resisted the Greeks until freedom was won. Then once more, for a hundred years Israel had her own kings who ruled our people with wisdom and justice."

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[7] *Cyrus, the Persian King.* Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Palestine and rebuild their Temple in the year 538 B.C. This rebuilding was done under the direction of two loyal Jews, Haggai and Zachariah. Another loyal Jew, Nehemiah, rebuilt the city walls in the year 444 B.C.

[8] *The Greeks.* These, under Alexander the Great, conquered the Persians in the year 332 B.C. The Jews passed under the control of the Greeks by the right of conquest.

There was a silence in the little shop, broken only by the tap, tap of hammer on wood. Then Joshua said, "But these were Roman tax-collectors who beat and robbed the poor fellow yonder. How came they to be our masters?"

"Our little country, my boy, is like the grain between the upper and the nether millstones for we lie between the great countries which are always quarreling and fighting to see which shall rule the world; the Persians, the Greeks or the Egyptians. But after a while a new race of fighting men challenged all of these powers. The Roman with his wealth, his skill and his arrogant spirit came. They have an emperor whom they call Caesar.[10] Now Caesar rules the world. And we, to whom God gave the land, pay tribute to him. Just now our country is divided into three parts. Each part is ruled by one of King Herod's sons under the Emperor Augustus Caesar who dwells in Rome. Our ruler in Galilee is Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, a cunning, cruel coward, who has a palace not far away from this small town in the city of Sepphoris.

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[9] *Mattathias and his Sons.* These were later known as The Maccabees. They gained supremacy over the Greeks in the year 168 B.C.

[10] *Emperor.* Augustus Caesar was the Roman Emperor from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D.

"We are allowed to have a governing body of our own called the Sanhedrin[11] and our own courts but in all large and important questions Herod Antipas is our law and master. It seems that we are permitted to live," father Joseph went on bitterly, "that we may make money to pay taxes to the Romans and that our young men may fill their armies with slaves and soldiers. We suffer always such treatment as this poor man has suffered and we are powerless. We who were once so great and glorious! We who are God's chosen people! O, God! Our God!" father Joseph prayed with the tears streaming down his cheeks, "send us a Saviour to lead us out of this bondage. Forsake us not but remember Thy people how they suffer. Fulfill Thy promises in us, Our Gracious Jehovah."

"Yes," he added in a calmer tone to the wide-eyed little boy, "God has promised us a Messiah who will right our wrongs and help us to take our true place and power in the world. When he comes, all wrong shall be righted and we shall dwell in peace and happiness."

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[11] *The Sanhedrin.* This was the Jewish Supreme Council and High Court. It is not known how it originated unless Moses established it. See Exodus 18:13-27. It was made up of seventy members and a president. The president was always the High Priest. It was required that members be wise, courageous, high-principled and humble. They must also be tall, good-looking, old, and of pure Jewish descent. When one member died he was replaced by appointment by the remaining members, of some qualified person. They had jurisdiction over questions of a religious nature. They could inflict excommunication and scourging and stoning. It will be remembered that it was the Sanhedrin that first accused Jesus of blasphemy. There were small local Sanhedrins of twenty-three or seven members dependent upon the population.

No more was said for a long time. The little boy seemed to be thinking too deeply to ask any more questions. When evening came the poor man wakened and seemed much happier. Mother had washed his wounds, bound them with clean strips of cloth and given him food. He was almost cheerful. "It is good," he said, "almost worth being robbed and beaten to find such kind and generous friends. I shall never forget and sometime if I can serve you in return I shall do so."

"Leave the yoke," said father Joseph. "I will mend it and my work shall cost you nothing."

"The God of our fathers forfend and bless thee. The Lord bless thee and keep thee," said the man earnestly.

That evening when they were sitting in the twilight upon the roof of their small home Joshua crept close to his mother and whispered, "When I am a man I shall help the poor and the sick as you do. But why does God let us suffer so? Why does he let us be hurt?"

"I know not, little son, except that He wishes us to learn to be pitiful and tenderhearted."

Things To Find Out.

1. Find the answers to these questions by asking or by reading. What is a tax? Why are we taxed? Who imposes taxes upon us? What are some of the things for which our government spends our tax money? (The great bulk of our tax money goes to pay for past wars and for preparation for future wars.) We pay a reasonable tax for the support of our government. The Jews paid a crushing tax for the support of another

people, the Romans. What great wrong is there in this? What makes you think it is wrong for one people to oppress and defraud another? Did Jesus at any time say anything that would lead you to believe that it is wrong to mistreat others? See Matthew 7:12.

2. Read in note eleven on page 139 the qualifications for membership in the Jewish Sanhedrin. If a man is wise, brave, high-principled, courageous, tall, handsome and of pure descent, is he sure to be a good ruler? Can you think of any other qualifications he might have that would help him? Could you safely leave any of these qualifications out and still have a good statesman? What qualifications must a man have before he can become a member of our Supreme Court?

Things To Do.

1. Find in the Old Testament, Exodus 18:13-27. Read the passage carefully. Then write a short story of how Moses organized the first group of seventy men to help him govern the people while they lived in the desert.

When you write your story try to give two good reasons why it is better to have several wise persons working together to enforce the law than to put all power in the hands of one person.

2. Talk with your teacher or parents to see if you can learn some reasons why we think it wiser to let all the people elect members to our governing body rather than to permit the President to appoint all members.

Make a report to your group at school about this.

Feeling God's Presence

It was not always that the little boy found his friend, John, when he went out with his goats to the hills. Sometimes he spent the whole day by himself.[1]

It was so that he went one warm morning in the springtime. Up the narrow winding street with its uneven stones slippery and dirty, past the open shops where people crowded and bickered over trade; through the opening in the low wall he went and Be Be, and the two babies so much like her, and Muh followed after him. The little boy wore his brown tunic that day with a yellow leather girdle and the wooden sandals which Assep, the sandal-maker, had made for him. But his legs and arms were bare. He had even neglected to wrap his head in the brown cloth which was his hat.[2] By and by, if the sun seemed too hot, or if the wind should blow very hard he would wrap it around his head and let the long ends fall down over his shoulders but just at first it was so pleasant that he went bareheaded.

He carried a long stick with a curved end which was his shepherd's staff and in his girdle was a shepherd's pipe. It was like a little flute on which he could play simple tunes. It was sometimes lonely out on the hills and the little pipe was company.

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[1] *Alone.* It is certain that Jesus felt the need of solitude. Many times it is recorded of him that he went away by himself to think and pray. It is said that he had a retreat or favorite hidden, solitary place to which he often went. See Luke 9:28, Matthew 14:23 and Matthew 15:29.

[2] *Head-Dress.* This was a square piece of cloth worn over the head, sometimes turban-fashion, sometimes merely thrown over the head with the ends falling over the neck. The purpose was to protect the neck and shoulders from heat and dust.

Besides the pipe and the shepherd's staff, he carried in his girdle, which was his only pocket, a handful of dried figs, a bit of cheese and a piece of bread for his lunch. Be Be would give him milk and he could find water in the brook, for this was springtime and all of the small mountain streams ran clear and full to the valley below.

Beyond the gate in the low wall lay the fruit trees, the vineyards and the cultivated land in which the farmers were working. It seemed a pity, the little boy thought, to plow up all the lovely wild flowers.[3] But flowers, however lovely to look at, are never good to eat. Perhaps it was best that wheat and barley be given a chance to grow.

The little boy stopped to watch a farmer as he drove his oxen back and forth around the curve of the great hill. It was hard work to hold the light plow[4] in the rocky soil. The man sowing the seed had gone before and the plowman was trying his best to cover the seed[5] before the birds should eat it all.

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[3] *Wild Flowers.* Wherever the land is not constantly cultivated the loveliest wild flowers grow in profusion in Palestine in the spring. Among them there are the tall yellow and white lilies of which Jesus spoke, wonderful vari-colored anemones and poppies and a blue flower like the larkspur.

[4] *Plow.* A primitive plow was made of a curved stick with a point which was tipped with iron.

[5] *The Seed.* The sower broadcast the seed by hand. The plowman followed and covered it. The seed was carried in a skin bag under the shoulder or in a fold of the garment.

Beyond the cultivated fields the little boy and his goats passed through orchards of almond, olive, pomegranate and fig trees in full bloom, pink, white and rose red. It was very cool and fragrant in the shade. The wild bees darted here and there gathering honey from the blooms and flying away home with it as fast as they could.

But, though it was so pleasant, he dared not stop here. He must take the goats out to the open free lands on the hills beyond, where they could graze on the tall, wild grass. So he went on and on. With every step the way grew rougher and steeper. The path he had followed through the fields and the orchards disappeared altogether and the little boy and the brown goats scrambled over the stony trail as best they could. Be Be began snatching here and there at bunches of grass growing near the rocks, so the little boy stopped and waited.

It was very quiet and peaceful there on the great hill. Down below, lay the low houses and narrow streets of Nazareth. He could see where the caravan trail wound among the hills far away. It was going on and on to some strange new place. The little boy wished he might go too. As he watched, some soldiers came in sight on the trail. The sunlight sparkled on their shields and on the harness of the horses that drew the chariot.[6] They seemed small and far away and very, very slow but when the little boy looked for them again they had disappeared.

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[6] *Chariots.* The Roman officers sometimes used chariots to which horses were harnessed. They were very heavy two-wheeled, open-backed cars, used mainly in games and warfare.

There was nothing more for him to see now but the blue sky and the eagles wheeling slowly over some higher hills. So he lay down in the shade of a great rock and drawing out his shepherd's pipe began to blow softly. Soon he tired even of this and lay wide awake but dreaming there in the shadow of the great rock. He was not afraid though he knew that there were foxes and lions and even great bears on the mountains. Robbers sometimes hid themselves in the caves and cliffs of the hills. Sometimes a poor, demented man possessed of an evil spirit lived all alone in some cave or a holy man had his retreat there. Snakes often crept out of the rocks to sun themselves. But he was afraid of none of these and he loved being alone for it was when he was alone that he was happiest.

As he lay there and gazed up into the sky he wondered if Heaven lay beyond the gleaming blue. Rabbi ben Ezra had told him a story of Heaven. "There was a man called Jacob," Rabbi ben Ezra had said, "who had started on a long journey all alone. He walked and walked until he was very tired. Night came and he lay down to sleep. He had no tent or fire to protect him so he wrapped himself in his warm cloak and lay down on the ground with a stone for a pillow and fell fast asleep.

"Over him shone a multitude of stars clear and near, so beautiful, so wonderful, that Jacob thought of them even in his sleep. Perhaps he wished that he might go up among them and see what lay beyond for in his dream he saw a beautiful, golden ladder slowly rise from the earth until it rested against the heavens. He could see no hands lifting it, could hear no voices, but there it stood, a gracious, shining, glowing stairway going up and up from earth to heaven.

"As Jacob watched in his dream, he saw angels, all in gleaming white with outspread, glowing wings going up and down the golden ladder. They seemed to float there between the dark earth where Jacob lay alone and the glittering stars where he longed to be.

"As he watched the place where the ladder ended in the sky he saw God. Jacob could never tell afterward just how God looked. It seemed to him that God too, was a shining whiteness with outspread wings. He could only dimly remember how God looked but he did remember clearly what God said. What He said was all loving-kindness and goodness.

"In telling about it afterwards Jacob said, 'I heard God say, "I am God. I am *your* God as I was your father's God. I will make you to be great and strong. I will give you many children. All the earth shall be blessed through you. I will be with you and keep you safe in every place to which you go. I will never leave you or forsake you." '[7] The wonder of this great dream woke Jacob and he was afraid.

"He said to himself, 'Surely God is in this place.' Then he did that which seemed to him the right and fitting thing to do. Since God was there, that was the place in which He could be worshipped. So he set up an altar of stones and worshipped God by pouring a little of his scanty store of oil over it. Then he ran away looking back fearfully over his shoulder at the little pile of stones where God dwelt." [8]

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[7] *God's Promise.* For this promise in full, read Genesis 28:11-16.

The little boy, alone on the hill overlooking Nazareth, remembered this story. He wished that he too might see the golden ladder with the shining angels going up and down and God standing in the sky telling him that He loved him and would care for him and make him rich and good and happy all his life.

But though he did not see God as a person standing in the sky, he did feel near to Goodness; the goodness of the warm earth, the fresh air, the beauty, order, power and peace that God gives even to little children.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find out all you can about primitive man's ways of worship. Read in "The Outline of History," Vol. 1, page 135, by H. G. Wells, how the Druids worshipped.

Read about Stonehenge in "Modern Times and the Living Past" by Elson, page 19.

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[8] *Set up an Altar.* "God in this place." Here may be seen an illustration of primitive man's belief that God could be in some particular place and could be worshipped *only* in that place; hence the common practice of setting up altars in high-places and under shady trees. It will be recalled that Moses gave as a reason for wishing to leave Egypt, that the people might worship their God in the Wilderness in which He dwelt. Also that later, they believed that their God dwelt in an ark and later still that He dwelt in the Temple at Jerusalem. See Deuteronomy 12:2. Out of this and many instances such as this, grew up the belief that the Church is God's house, i. e., God's dwelling place. It was a fixed belief in Jesus' day that God dwelt in the Temple at Jerusalem and that in prayer one should face Jerusalem for that reason. But Jesus said, "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." See John 4:20-24.

Read about the building of the Tabernacle by Moses when the Hebrew people were in the Wilderness. Exodus 25, 6. Read about Solomon's Temple which he built for the Hebrews later. 1 Kings 6.

What are some of the great churches in the world today? St. Peter's at Rome is one. Notre Dame at Paris is another. Westminster Abbey at London is still another. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, now being built in the city of New York, will be one of the great churches of the world. We no longer believe that God dwells in houses but we build churches that we may have quiet, beautiful places in which to worship what seems to us to be worthy of worship, Goodness, Beauty, Truth and Love.

Things To Do.

1. Visit the most beautiful church or cathedral in your city. Look carefully at the altar. Look at the stained-glass windows. Try to think of some reasons why a beautiful church is a good place in which to worship God.

Do you feel that it might be easier to worship God in a church than out of doors? Some one has said, "The woods were God's first Temples."

2. Find Genesis 27 and 28. Read both chapters and then write or tell the story of Jacob and his brother Esau.

More Rainy Day Stories

Now that the rains had come in earnest [1] and it was chilly and dark, the little boy helped father Joseph more and more in the shop. Father Joseph loved to have him near, for he was gentle and teachable.

"Hold the saw in this way, son," he would say. "Then you can see how you are bringing out the beautiful grain of the olive wood.[2] It is a piece that Rabbi Mattathias brought to me with the request that I make for him a very beautiful small chest.[3] He has come but lately from Sepphoris where the king[4] lives. He says that in the king's palace he saw a chest such as he wishes us to make. He has a new scroll so wonderfully written that he thinks it should have a chest all its own.

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[1] *The rains.* The rainy season did not mean that the rains were continuous or very cold. It meant only that there were heavy storms likely to come from September to March. There would be many clear days in between storms; days in which the ceaseless work went on. Planting, cultivating the vines and fruit trees, the care of the flocks, spinning, weaving, sewing, making pottery and preparing food constituted but a part of the work. The little boy had to learn his trade. These rainy days were busy days.

[2] *Olive wood.* The olive tree was too valuable as a food producer to be used as lumber except in rare cases by the very rich. It has a lovely, clear, creamy tone beautifully marked by a darker tone.

[3] *A chest.* The chest was the commonest piece of furniture in the Jewish home. Even the poorest folk would have one chest. It was sometimes painted.

[4] *The King or Tetrarch.* This was Herod Antipas, one of the three sons of Herod the Great, who ruled over the province of Galilee. He is said to have had a palace at the city of Sepphoris only about four miles from Nazareth.

Rabbi Mattathias bears a great name. We should be proud to serve him."

The little boy sawed carefully for a moment then stopped to run his fingers thoughtfully over the smooth wood.

"Perhaps the king gave him the wood," he said slowly. "I am afraid to touch it. I am not skillful as you are and the wood is too beautiful and costly to be roughly cut. But please tell me why you say that Rabbi Mattathias[5] bears a great name. Was there some great hero among our people who bore such a name?"

"The history of our people, son, is full of heroic names but among them few are greater than that of Mattathias."

"Tell me about him, please."

"Well then, while you polish this wood with your knife and the file[6] yonder, I will measure and cut the boards for the chest and tell you the tale of Mattathias and his five brave sons."

So while the heavy winter rain beat upon the earth the two worked happily in the small shop. The little boy paused often to listen while father Joseph told this story.

"Almost two hundred years ago,"[7] he began, "there lived in the small hill town of Modin in Judea a wise, brave man named Mattathias. This man had five sons. Their names were Jochanan, the fortunate; Simon, the jewels; Judas, the hammerer; Eleazar, the monster-killer, and Jonathan, the cunning." [8]

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[5] *Mattathias.* He belonged to a priestly family by the name of Hasmon. His son, Judas, came to be known as Judas Maccabeus. The exact origin of the term, Maccabee, is unknown.

[6] *Files.* This tool has been found by recent explorers in Palestine.

[7] *The date.* The date for the Maccabees is 165-3 B.C.

"Were the sons wise and brave, too?" asked the little boy.

"You shall see. Mattathias and his five sons lived during a sorrowful, disgraceful time of our history. We have known grief and shame. We have sinned deeply and God has punished us, but seldom have our people suffered for their sins as they did at this time."

Father Joseph's deep voice sounded very sorrowful as he said this. It was as though he felt sorry and ashamed too. But after a moment he went on. "Whatever have been our sins and our punishments, there have always been a few among us who have been loyal to Jehovah. Mattathias was one of these. It was like this.

"Antiochus, the Greek, was king at Jerusalem. And he, in his pride and zeal, had ordered that the Jews should no longer worship Jehovah in the Temple or anywhere else in the country but instead, all men should bow down to Greek gods and worship them. He even dared to have a statue of the Greek god, Jupiter, set up in our holy Temple and commanded that the Jews no longer sacrifice to Jehovah but that they pray to Jupiter.

"So powerful and so cruel was King Antiochus that many dared not disobey him. Many bowed before

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[8] *The Five Brothers.* These five brothers are almost unique in family life, in that they worked together in harmony and were loyal to each other, each serving his country to the best of his ability without jealousy or pride.

Jupiter and professed to worship him while others refused to worship any god or paid some unscrupulous ones to go through the forms of worship of Jupiter for them. Our glorious Temple was defiled by heathen rites. Our people were persecuted almost beyond bearing and our children were untaught and untrained for Jehovah's service. Only a few refused absolutely to be disloyal to God. Among these very few was Mattathias.

"When the king's soldiers came to Modin and demanded that all should worship heathen idols Mattathias boldly said, 'Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him and fall away, every one from the religion of their fathers, yet will I and my sons walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances. We will not hearken to the king's words to go from our religion either on the right hand or on the left.'

"But when he said this, a cowardly Jew stepped forward to offer the sacrifice for him. Then the brave, loyal, old man could control himself no longer but drawing his sword killed both the Jew and the king's officer. There was nothing left for him to do after that but to escape to the mountains. King Antiochus would have utterly destroyed him. But once in the mountains, hidden safely in caves of which he knew, he was safe for a little while.

"Then Mattathias did what King David had done before him. He gathered about him an army of men like himself, outlaws, who for one reason or another were in hiding; men who were desperate and willing to fight for their country and their faith because, unless they would so fight, both were lost. They had no clothing and no food. When the clothing they had on when they escaped wore out, they made coats for themselves from the skins of wild animals. For food they killed and ate the wild goats. They ate also the berries and grasses that grew wild in the mountains. Yet their courage did not fail nor did they feel one whit more like worshipping the heathen idols than they did before. Instead they knelt every night and every morning with their faces turned toward Jerusalem and prayed to the one true God, Jehovah, and Jehovah heard their prayers.

"Now it happened once in the history of our people that thousands were slain in battle because they were attacked on the Sabbath day when our law forbids us to work. Mattathias remembered this and said to his men, 'Whosover shall come to make battle with us on the Sabbath day, we will fight against them. We shall not be murdered as our brethren were.' So they were not caught in that trap. Mattathias was too wise for that.

"He was wise enough too, to know which of his sons would make the better captain and which the better counsellors. Simon, the jewel, he made a counsellor, and Judas, the hammerer, he made captain. But Judas divided his army into four parts and gave each of his other three brothers command over a part. They took for their watchword their brother Eleazar's name, which means, 'God helps.' They prayed continually this prayer, 'Not unto us O, Lord. Not unto us but unto Thy name give glory.'

"But Judas knew that he could not hope to defeat the Greeks in open battle. They outnumbered his little band of ragged half-starved soldiers four to one. So one dark night he left his camp fires burning and his sentries posted as usual while he and his army crept softly behind the Greek army and attacked from an unexpected quarter. The Greek general, seeing the Jewish camp fires glowing and hearing the sentries pacing up and down, never dreamed that Judas and his forlorn followers were destroying one of his finest divisions. When at last they did attack Judas, the brave sentries stood at their posts and gave their lives first for their country's sake.

"This victory over his main division so discouraged King Antiochus that he fled, leaving behind food and rich clothing enough to feed a much larger army than that of Judas. As the ragged soldiers discarded their own tatters for the rich clothing, the blue and purple robes of silk, counted the gold and silver and feasted on the rich food their enemy had left behind, they sang that song which is most truly our national anthem, 'Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good. For His mercy endureth forever.'

"Of course there were other battles and other victories for Mattathias' brave sons but in the end they were victorious and Jonathan was made high-priest and king of the Jews."

"Did they all die but Jonathan?" said the little boy gravely. He was glad they had fought bravely for God but he could never bear the thought of hatred and cruelty and killing.

"Yes," answered father Joseph. "They all died. The old father, Mattathias, and his five brave sons but their courage and faith kept our nation alive in a time of greatest peril."

"I do not like fighting and trickery," said the little boy. "Couldn't there be a better way to be true to God than by killing each other? Wouldn't the way of *love* be a better way?"

Father Joseph looked at the little boy in silence and very gravely as though puzzled to know what to say.

"God knows," he said at last. "But man has not yet found the way of love."

Things To Find Out.

1. Mattathias and his five sons were great patriots. Find the meaning of the word patriot. Who are some of the world's greatest patriots? Who was Charlemagne? Robert Bruce? Kosciusko? John Paul Jones? George Washington?

Name some of their characteristics. What is loyalty? Courage? Enthusiasm? Unselfishness?

Have we any patriots today? Who was Theodore Roosevelt? Who was Woodrow Wilson? Can a man be a true patriot without fighting in battles to kill his opponents? What other ways are there than that of killing your enemy, of securing the right?

What did the little boy mean by "the way of love?" See Luke 6:27.

2. Mattathias' five sons worked together, each doing

what he could do best. They followed their father's advice and respected his judgment. By so working together they succeeded in overcoming their enemies and in restoring the worship of God in their Temple.

What would have happened if each one had insisted on being made king?

Can you think of other brothers it tells of in the Bible who did not so agree? See Genesis 27 and Genesis 37:2-28.

By which means do men and women accomplish more for their country, by working selfishly alone to put themselves forward or by trying to use the abilities of many people?

3. *A National Anthem.* This was the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm. Compare it with our National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner." Or with "America." Think of some other National Anthems, the English and the Austrian for example. What is there alike in them all?

4. *Handel's Music.* The great musician, Handel, has written an oratorio in memory of Judas Maccabee. In it is the music to the song, "See, the Conquering Hero Comes." It might be worth while to get a phonograph record of this music and learn to sing this song in memory of a brave, loyal man.

Things To Do.

1. The little boy learned to work with wood. He found many beautiful kinds of wood. Can you name some of our most beautiful woods and describe them?

Perhaps you can bring to class specimens of various kinds of woods.

2. Find the 118th Psalm. Read it aloud. Compare it with our National Anthem. Could you set parts of it to music?

3. Ask some one who is likely to know, about The League of Nations. Ask about the Kellogg Peace Pact. Do you think Jesus would say these are "ways of love?"

Write a story about these efforts to secure peace.

Read or tell your story to your class.

Deep Questions

RUTH was dead. The little boy heard them whisper the news to his mother. The whisper sounded as loud as a shout that echoed and reechoed from the cliffs.

Dead! Not Ruth? Surely not Ruth; she who had been so full of happiness that she had gone dancing down the hill singing for pure joy; she who had held him in her arms that first morning of his coming to Nazareth and let him help grind the wheat. How could it be true?

Outside the sun shone on the green fields. The birds sang. Work went on in the shops. The little boy could hear the call of the water carriers and the cry of the fish peddlers who came from the sea of Galilee with fresh fish to sell. Life was going on. The doves in the grape arbor had baby doves to which they cooed softly, but Ruth was dead.

The woman who came to tell his mother whispered her news and mother turned quickly away into the house, shutting the door after her, leaving the little boy alone. But before she went she had given him a swift, anxious smile.

The little boy sat very still and waited.

Very soon mother and the neighbor woman who had brought the news came out of the house and walked swiftly away. They had taken off their head-dresses [1] and their long hair streamed about them in disorder. They had torn [2] their garments and thrown ashes [3] over their heads and as they went they chanted an old dirge, a long, mournful, wailing [4] song of sorrow. As they walked along other women joined them and took up the song until the whole, peaceful, little town knew that someone had died.

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[1] *Head-Dresses.* The women wore always some kind of a head-dress. It might be a veil or piece of cloth or it might be a metal band

Like a trembling shadow the little boy followed after, his heart full of a great fear and longing.

The low dark room in which Ruth lay so quietly was unchanged. There was nothing different that he could see except that she did not spring up to welcome him with gay words and laughter. Did an evil spirit [5] hold her that she could not see him? The little boy crept softly into a shadowy corner and waited to see what would happen. All the sweet, quiet peace of his life was broken. He did not want Ruth to go away. He wanted her to stay and be happy.

All suddenly, before he knew that it was coming or

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with ornaments of coins or jewels, or both. Only in mourning was the head of a woman uncovered. The custom of keeping the head and sometimes the face covered is still observed among most Oriental women.

[2] *Rent or Torn Garments.* It was customary in mourning to tear the garments. The rent was made over the heart and was not more than a hand's breadth in size. See II Samuel 3:31.

[3] *Ashes.* To throw ashes or earth over the head was also a sign of mourning. See Jeremiah 6:26.

[4] *Wailing.* This was and is a custom at Oriental funerals. The women walked before the body and wailed aloud. Women did this rather than men because they were considered more responsible for bringing life into the world than men. Therefore they should be more sorrowful at death. There were always professional women mourners to be hired. See Jeremiah 9:17, 18. See also Jeremiah 22:18 for some of the words used in the wailing.

[5] *Evil Spirits.* Belief that evil spirits could enter into a person and control his actions was very common.

could keep it back, there came into his throat a choking pain. He covered his face with his hands and sobbed out loud. The sound of his sobbing seemed louder than the wails of the hired mourners for they expressed real sorrow.

Suddenly he felt himself lifted and held in strong, kind arms; his face pressed against a rough shoulder to hide his tears. It was Rabbi ben Ezra who had lifted him. Now he was carrying him swiftly through the streets. Now they passed through the door of the synagogue. Now they were sitting on a stone bench in the garden, the little boy on Rabbi ben Ezra's lap still trembling and shaking with crying.

"There. There, my boy," whispered the old man kindly. "Why did they let you go there? It was cruel of them to let you go. They had no thought for you. There, there. Be now at peace, little tender-heart."

"No one let me go," the little boy whispered. "I went all by myself. I went to find Ruth. Where is she? Why did she go away?"

"I will tell you a story,"[6] said the old man softly. "Perhaps it will help you to understand what none of us understand without faith in God's goodness. In the beginning, so we are told, God created all things, light and motion, form and order, the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars. Then He created the beasts and all creeping things. And last of all He created man.

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[6] *The Story of Creation.* For this story in full read the first three chapters of Genesis. Remember that this is figurative language or an attempt to explain the world and life in symbolic language, not in terms of scientific fact as we might do today.

And when He had finished creating He looked upon His work, and found it good and pleasant to see.

"The man and the woman He placed in a lovely garden full of flowers and fruits, cool in shade, with sweet, flowing water and singing birds. There was nothing there to make one unhappy but everything to make him content and joyous. And God, walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, found it pleasant.

"There was but one thing that God told the man and the woman that they must not do. They were not to eat of the fruit of one tree. Everything else, all the beauty and peace and food, was theirs freely. They ruled over all other created things. There was nothing to hurt them or destroy them. There was just this one fruit they were not to eat.

"But Adam and Eve, for that is what they were called, could not be happy or content until they had tasted of this forbidden fruit. So together they ate it. Because nothing could be long hidden from God, he knew that they had disobeyed Him and because of this disobedience they were driven from the garden.

"This beautiful, old story, lad, has a deeper meaning than at first appears. The writer of it was trying to explain by means of a story why death[7] came into the world. He meant us to understand that to do wrong means to shut ourselves away from God. To be shut away from God means death. It means that by doing wrong we shut ourselves away from good which is God."

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[7] *Meaning of Death.* Death among the Jews at this time was regarded as punishment for sin and the expiation for sin.

"Did Ruth disobey God?" the little boy asked earnestly.

"Some divine law was disregarded. It might have been some well-known law of health. It might have been some deeper, spiritual law. No one is wise enough to say just why or how it all comes about. But we believe that death is a punishment for sin. That sin is a disregard of God's wise laws."

The little boy was quiet except for now and then a long, trembling sigh. He seemed to be asleep but when Rabbi ben Ezra stirred and lifted him he said, "Good master, did Ruth's mother and Dinah sin too that they suffer? I feel so sorry for them."

The old man lifted his head in surprise. "You ask deep questions,[8] son. There is an old saying that he who has the wit to ask deeply of Wisdom shall some day have the wisdom to answer his own questions. I hope it may be so with you for I know not how to answer you."

Things To Find Out.

1. Different peoples have different mourning customs. Try to find out what some of these customs are.

Read in an encyclopedia about Chinese funeral rites. Read also about the American Indian funeral rites.

Compare them with our own.

As civilization advances and we learn more of the working of natural law, we change our customs. We give up many superstitions.

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[8] *The Deep Question.* A wise man who lived after Jesus, tried to answer this question. He said, "We are all bound together into one great spiritual body. Because we are so bound together every member suffers when one member suffers. No one can live for himself alone." If you will read 1 Corinthians 12:13-26 you will find this explanation. The writer was St. Paul.

2. Read the story of creation as it is told in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Where do we suppose the Garden of Eden to have been?

What is the difference between symbolic or figurative language and literal or factual language?

"It was a land flowing with milk and honey." That is figurative language.

It was a fertile, beautiful land. That is literal language. The two statements mean the same.

Pilate washed his hands and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man."

The washing of the hands was symbolic. Much of the language of the Bible is figurative.

Great truths are stated there in figurative ways. We have to be careful when we read the Bible to distinguish between figurative and literal statements.

Things To Do.

1. Make a burial cave in the hillside on your sand-table model of Nazareth.

2. If you like to do so, play at funeral.

Make some funeral costumes.

Chant some of the mourning songs.

Dance a funeral dance.

On pages 99 to 103 of the book "The Peasantry of Palestine," by Grant you will find a funeral song such as is composed and sung today in Palestine.

If you play at funeral you might write and sing a song somewhat like this.

Sorrow That Brings Joy

THE thought that Ruth had died because some sin had been done made the little boy very unhappy. He sat quietly while the other children played and shouted and laughed. He crept softly at evening to the garden of the synagogue only to sit by Rabbi ben Ezra in silence. He did all of the work he was expected to do and more. But he could not forget Ruth, her gay laughter and her loving, gentle ways.

Was there no way to escape this dreadful punishment for wrongdoing? No way to know when one was breaking God's laws? No way to be sorry enough to make God pitiful?

He drooped about, pale and quiet. Mother watched him. Her heart ached with pity for him. Father Joseph saw how changed he was and tried to give him new and interesting things to do. Rabbi ben Ezra felt that he was partly to blame. Perhaps he had not said enough to make the little boy understand. He would try again.

"You must not think, my boy," he said gently, "that God enforces His laws without giving man a fair chance to choose the right instead of the wrong. God is just and wise and loving."

"Ruth was good," said the little boy, his lips quivering.

"It seemed so," answered the old man. "But in this web of life all are bound up together. No one lives for himself alone[1] or enjoys or suffers alone. But each one's sin affects another. And each one's goodness reaches out to others to make them happy and better. You know the law I am sure, that 'the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generations.' "[2]

"Yes," said the little boy dully. "Do you think, good master, that it is a just and fair law?"

"You speak as an ignorant child, a wayward rebellious one," exclaimed the old man sternly. "Seek forgiveness for the sin of rebellion against God's holy law." Never before had the little boy heard such a harsh tone or such stern words from his teacher.

"I——I'm sorry," he whispered. "I— I meant only ———" but he could say no more.

Looking at the small tear-stained face the old man forgot his just anger and stopped to lay a kind hand on the boy's shoulder. "There, there, lad," he answered. "You are but a child whose tender heart is touched by sorrow for the first time. But rest sure that God's laws are good though we may not be able to understand the reason for all things. The blessed Day of Atonement is near.[3] Do you understand its meaning?"

"Please teach me. I am ignorant. I need wisdom and understanding."

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[1] *No One Lives to Himself.* See St. Paul's letter to the Romans, 14:7.

[2] *The law.* One of the ten commandments as enunciated by Moses. Exodus 20:5, 6.

[3] *Day of Atonement.* The ninth and tenth of Tishri. This was nine days after the beginning of the civil year, the first of Tishri or our twelfth of September. It was a high Sabbath and solemn fast day when confession of sin was made. It was made joyous also by a sense of forgiveness. See Leviticus 16, for the law concerning this day.

"Your feet are set upon the pathway of wisdom and your heart to understanding. I will try to make clear to you God's blessed plan for forgiveness of sin.[4]

"On the ninth of next month comes the blessed Day of Atonement. Next Sabbath marks the feast of Trumpets, the beginning of the new year.[5] It is written in the law that the new year shall be greeted with trumpets and prayer and the greeting. 'May you be written down for a happy New Year.' This is a joyous day. But in nine days comes a solemn fast. Solemn, yet joyous too, for after sorrow for wrongdoing comes the blessed assurance of forgiveness.

"From one going down of the sun to another no food is taken. In the glorious Temple at Jerusalem the people gather and confess and mourn for their sins.[6] While the people sit in silence and sorrow, the High Priest enters the Holy Place. He has put off his gorgeous robes of crimson and gold and dressed himself in simple, white linen in sign of humility. That he may be without sin himself, he sacrifices a bullock and a ram upon the altar and sprinkles the blood seven times upon the covering before the ark[7] and upon the altar of incense.[8]

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[4] *God's Forgiveness.* This is also vividly illustrated by the book of the prophet Jonah. Read the entire book.

[5] *The New Year or Feast of Trumpets.* This was also called a "blowing commemoration." See Leviticus 23:24. It marked the commencement of the seventh month (Tishri) of the ecclesiastical and the first of the civil year.

[6] *The People.* The congregation had little audible part in the service.

[7] *The Ark of the Covenant.* For a description of the ark see Exodus 37:1-9. Deuteronomy 31:26.

[8] *Altar of Incense.* For a description see Exodus 30:1-10.

"Then, while the people still wait in silence, two goats are brought before him. One is to be slain by the High Priest and offered upon the altar, a symbol[9] of the sorrow and repentance of the people for sin. While upon the head of the other goat are laid the sins of the people and he is led away to the Wilderness and given over to Azazel.[10] Which of the goats shall be sacrificed and which set free is determined by lot.[11] Two small tokens of wood or gold are placed in an urn. The High Priest thrusts both hands into the urn and grasps both tokens. That in the right hand indicates the goat for sacrifice. That in the left, the one to be sent away into the Wilderness.[12] Then the High Priest, taking the goat that is to be set free, presses both hands upon the animal's head and confesses over it all the sins of the people. So are our sins laden upon the scape-goat. He bears them away and they are forgotten of God. So does repentance and confession bring us God's free forgiveness.

"This is what makes the Day of Atonement a happy one though we fast and put aside all labor and play.

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[9] *A Symbol.* A symbol is a concrete object or act which stands for an idea or a thought. The flag is a symbol of love of country. To raise the hands above the head is a symbol of surrender. The scape-goat was a symbol of giving up wrongdoing or repentance.

[10] *Azazel.* The god of the Wilderness.

[11] *Choice by Lot.* A superstitious practice to avoid responsibility or to throw the responsibility on a supernatural force. It is still practiced in many instances when one wishes to be impartial.

[12] *Sent to the Wilderness.* A man was appointed to lead the goat to the Wilderness, the barren mountainous regions to the east of Jerusalem. This man was rendered unclean by the act and could not return to the Temple that day. He made use of a sort of telegraphic signalling to inform those waiting in the Temple that the goat was free.

But we must understand, lad, that the blood, the incense, and the ritual over the scape-goat are but symbols of a deep, inner sorrow. It is not the goat that frees us but the repentance and forgiveness. Far back in the beginning of our religion, perhaps, the people may have believed that the goat really carried away their sins but our great teachers, the prophets, have led us beyond this.[13] Now we know that the feeling of joy that comes when one is forgiven and is resolved to do no more wrong is of the spirit alone. The old forms will grow less and less. The true spirit will increase.

"Our greatest teacher, Isaiah, says that the true sign of sorrow is to strive to undo the heavy burdens of the oppressed, to deal bread to the hungry, to clothe the naked and to be lovingly kind to our own flesh. 'Then shall the light break forth as the morning and thine health shall spring speedily forth. . . . The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.' Isaiah 50:8.

"How think you, little son? Is your heart still troubled?"

The little boy lifted his face to his teacher. On it was a shining happiness, a still peace.

Things To Find Out.

1. Name some symbols of ideas other than the ones mentioned in the notes.

2. How could the man who led the goat into the Wil-

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[13] *Advanced Belief.* Judaism by Jesus' time had advanced to a realization of the spiritual significance of this ritual. See Isaiah 58th chapter. This and the 57th chapter were the scripture read at the morning service on the Day of Atonement. See also chapter 50.

derness telegraph back to the Temple? Had our system of telegraphy been invented?

3. Tell what you know about Isaiah. Reread the story on page 97 of this book. This will remind you of Isaiah.

4. When one has done wrong what must he do before he can worship God. Read Matthew 5:23, 24 and tell what you think it means.

Things To Do.

1. Learn how telegraphing is done today. Why is our telegraphic code called the Morse code?

2. Do you think that casting a lot is a fair way of deciding things? Do you ever cast lot in playing?

What are you doing when you count out saying, "Eenie, meenie, miney, mo?" Or "Wier, brier, limber, lock?" Is this choosing by lot?

Can you think of a fairer way?

New Friends

"HAVE you no carpenters in Capernaum[1] that my kinsman, Eleazer, must send all the way to Nazareth for one to build his house?"

"Carpenters to be sure, good Joseph, but none more skillful or faithful than you. Your kinsman's house is to be set by the sea of Galilee and must be built solidly upon the rock or storms may sweep it away.[2] He promises if you will come and build it for him that you shall have stone for the foundation and walls with cement to bind it and sturdy oak for the rafters and floors and doors; that you shall be paid well and cared for in his own home as befits one's kinsman. Will you come?"

Father Joseph did not answer at once but glanced instead at the little boy who was quietly shaping a bit of wood with his knife. He had not been listening to the conversation but seemed lost in some sad dream. He still thought of Ruth and grieved for her. He seemed to have forgotten how to laugh in the old carefree, happy way.

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[1] *Capernaum.* The city of Capernaum lay at the northern end of the sea of Galilee about twelve or fifteen miles north-east of Nazareth. It lay on the main-travelled road from Damascus to Ptolemais on the coast. It is the city to which Jesus went to live when he was a man at the beginning of his active ministry. There is now no trace of it left. See Matthew 4:13.

[2] *A House Built on a Rock.* Many of the houses of Palestine at this time were very flimsy affairs built of loose stone; that is, stone laid loosely together without cement, with thatched roofs of brush or straw and earth. These were often swept away in the fierce storms. Jesus evidently had observed this type of house. See Matthew 7:24-27.

Father Joseph's first thought, when Joas had come from his kinsman [3] in Capernaum asking that he come to build his new house, was that the journey and change might be good for the little boy. So now he said, "What do you think, lad? Would you like to go to Capernaum with me for a time to help me build a new house? There will be much of interest in the city, new comrades and the sea with its boats and fishermen." [4]

The little boy laid down his work and came nearer his father. "I'd love to go," he said. "I've never seen the sea except for far away glimpses we get from the hills above Nazareth.[5] But what would mother do? We couldn't leave her all alone."

"We could ask some one to stay with her. I'm sure she would want us to do this work. We don't often have a chance to build a whole house and such a fine one as this. You could learn the whole business from foundation to roof. Besides you would help to keep me from being lonesome and homesick in a great city. Shall we say we will do the work?"

The little boy was thinking of so many things that he might see on the journey that he did not answer at once but father Joseph, seeing the bright interest in his face, turned to Joas and said, "Tell your master, Eleazer, that I will come to Capernaum, I and my son," he added, "and do the work he wishes done. Tell him to have trustworthy workmen whom I may choose to help me and have all in readiness. I do not like being away from home but for the sake of the lad I would make greater sacrifices than this."

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[3] *A kinsman.* One's own relatives had peculiar claim for hospitality. A member of the family or clan must be taken in and cared for.

[4] *The Sea.* The sea of Galilee was also called the Sea of Gennesaret. It is a large lake through which the Jordan river runs on its way to the Dead Sea. It is a particularly lovely lake which Jesus loved and around which centered much of his teaching and many of his activities.

[5] *The Sea Seen from the Hills above Nazareth.* This was the Mediterranean sea which lay west of Palestine.

Mother and James and baby Joses stood at the fountain and waved to them when they started to Capernaum. They looked back and waved in return as long as they could but with the first curve of the hill, they and little Nazareth dropped out of sight. Father Joseph and the little boy were out in the great world.

Strange new hills stretched away on either side. New voices called to them. New sounds, new sights, new thoughts absorbed them. Dochi, carrying their tools and their food and bundles, walked beside them, his ears flapping, his small sharp hooves sinking deep in the dust of the road. They passed a camel loaded with grass so heavily that only his feet and the tip of his nose could be seen. He looked like a moving meadow. The little boy laughed out loud to see him and father Joseph laughed with happiness because the little boy was happy.[6] They passed a beggar who turned and followed them a little way. He had a ragged coat, bare, dirty feet and a singsong cry. Father Joseph gave him a coin and he thanked them with a blessing.

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[6] *Joseph's Care for Jesus.* The best evidence that we have that Joseph tenderly cared for and loved and instructed the child Jesus, is found in Jesus' high concept of fatherhood. He knew the meaning of a father's loving care. In later life he illustrated his meaning and understanding of God's love and care for His children by comparing Him to an earthly father. See Luke 15:11-32 and also John 15:1-7. It is said that Joseph died when Jesus was about eighteen years of age.

They passed a holy man walking with his disciples, their faces covered with their headcloths to keep out the dust.

Soon they heard behind them the tramp of marching feet and drew aside to let a body of Roman soldiers go by. The soldiers walked boldly looking straight ahead and the people stood in sullen silence as they passed.

Before noon they stopped to eat and rest but early afternoon found them again on their way. They were going steadily downward in curves and spirals towards a great valley[7] and with every circle the air grew warmer; the sun beat down with a fiercer heat.

By noon of the next day they came out on a height and saw before them, like a still blue bit of sky fallen to earth and caught among the hills, the lovely blue lake of Galilee, dotted with white sails. The city of Capernaum snuggled close to the water's edge. The little boy cried out in surprise, "Oh, it is beautiful!"

On and on they journeyed. For a little they would lose sight of the sea but again they would get a glimpse of it and each time it was nearer and more beautiful. Darkness fell but they travelled on. The little boy, tired of walking, was lifted to Dochi's back and then to father Joseph's strong arms and when he reached Capernaum knew only that darkness and sleep on a bed laid on the roof of a tiny house, met him. Dimly he heard kind voices and felt gentle hands slipping off his worn sandals but that was all. Sleep had him until morning.

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[7] *Altitude of the Sea of Galilee.* The sea lies nearly seven hundred feet below sea level. It is very hot in that entire region. But cool currents of air often sweep down the gorges that penetrate the mountains around the sea. Sudden fierce squalls of wind and rain often sweep down upon the sea. They are often quite local so that one portion of the sea may be disturbed while another remains very calm. The sea is shaped like a pear. It is about thirteen miles long and eight wide. It is not more than one hundred and fifty feet deep.

When he awoke the birds were singing. The sky was full of a soft splendor of light and the blue waters of the sea beat a steady roll call on the shore below.

Everywhere he looked beyond the blue water he could see great hills rising one above the other, melting away into purple shadows that met and mingled with the sky. But though he looked long and earnestly he could not see Nazareth where mother and James and Joses waited. A little pang of homesickness stirred at his heart but was quickly forgotten, for a boy called to him and he ran down the steps[8] and out on the shining wet sand of the shore.

"How would you like to take a boat ride?" said the tall brown boy who had called. "I have been waiting here for you to wake up. I saw you come last night but you were too sleepy to see me. This is my father's boat and I know how to sail it. I will take you a little way out and bring you back safely. My name is Andrew. What is yours?"

"I am Joshua. I came from Nazareth," said the little boy. "I never even saw a boat before or the sea either, at least close like this."

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[8] *The Steps.* The steps that led to the roof were built on the outside of the house, so that it was possible to descend from the roof without entering the house.

The tall boy looked surprised but was too polite to laugh. He looked all about him at the pebbly beach with the white waves just lapping its edge; at the fisherman's nets spread out to dry; at the heap of shining fish in baskets and again at the strange boy from Nazareth. Then he smiled.

"Well, then, you'll be sure to like it. It's splendid. There comes my brother, Simon. He's bigger and older than I, so we can surely have a boat ride. Hi, Simon! Here's a boy who never saw a lake or a boat in his life or went sailing or swimming. Let's take him for a sail in the boat."

Simon, a tall boy with black eyes and a shock of bushy black hair came up and looked the little boy over quickly. Before the little boy could do more than smile he cried out, "Why not? Come on. I'll steer. Sit here, new boy," he said. "You can see best from here."

"His name's Joshua," said Andrew. "He came from Nazareth. He never caught a fish in his life."

"That's nothing," said Simon, hauling at the sail. "We can soon teach him to fish. What can he do?"

"I'm going to help my father build a house for our kinsman, Eleazer," answered the little boy. "And I know lots of good stories and I have a knife which Baruch, the peddler, got in Damascus."

"I like you," cried Simon, throwing out a white sail. "I wish you'd stay in Capernaum always."

"I like you too," answered the little boy. "I think I will have to go back to Nazareth soon but I might come back here sometime."

"What kind of stories do you know?" asked Andrew. "Couldn't you tell us one?"

"If I knew what kind of stories you like best maybe I could."

"Well then," said Simon, swinging the boat about so that they sailed towards the far hills to the south, "tell about boys who did brave things. I like it when there's lots of danger and chances to do things."

"There was a boy once who was invited to the king's palace. There he became acquainted with the king's son, the prince. The two became loyal friends. But the king grew jealous and would have killed the boy if he had not escaped. Would you like to hear about him?"

"How did he escape? Did he fight his way out with a sword?"

"The prince helped him. But I'll tell you all about it. It all happened long, long ago but in this very country and among our own people. The king's name was Saul. He was our first king. The prince's name was Jonathan. He was only a boy, not much older than we.

"King Saul wasn't very happy. I don't know why he wasn't but he used to be moody and sullen and bad-tempered. Maybe he was sick. I'm not sure about that but anyway when he felt bad, it sometimes helped if he could hear music.

"There was a boy named David who could play the harp and once when King Saul was cross and sad they sent for David and he played so beautifully on his harp that the king forgot his sadness. After that David came often to play for the king, so often that he was like a member of the family.[9]

"He was glad to come for he and Jonathan liked each other. They played together and hunted together and talked and had such good times that they came to love each other dearly. David was tall and fair and handsome and brave while Jonathan was slender and dark and quiet.

"They were all very happy until King Saul grew jealous because he thought his son loved David more than he loved him.

"He was so jealous that one day while David sat on a stool and played on his harp he threw a javelin at him and if David hadn't been watchful and quick to jump aside he would have been killed.

"But, though he did escape, he knew he must not go back to the palace while the king was so angry with him. He hid in the fields and waited. At evening Jonathan came out to the fields to find his friend and they talked together long and earnestly. They agreed that Jonathan should watch his father, the king, and let David know when it was safe for him to come back.

" 'I will come hunting in the fields tomorrow,' said Jonathan. 'You must be hiding where you can see me and hear what I say. If I say to the lad, "See, the arrows are on this side of you. Pick them up!" come, for it is well with you. But if I say to the boy, "The arrows are beyond you," then go, for Jehovah sends you away. Let God watch between you and me forever.'

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[9] *Jonathan and David.* For this story read 1 Samuel 16:21-23. 1 Samuel 18:10-11 and 1 Samuel 20.

"So the next day Jonathan went with a lad to the fields to shoot. And David was hidden behind a rock where he could see and hear all that went on. Jonathan shot an arrow and said to the lad, 'Run now. Find me the arrow which I shot' When the lad started to hunt for the arrow he called loudly so that David could hear, 'Is not the arrow beyond thee? Hurry! Do not stop or wait for me but carry the arrows to the city. I will shoot no more today.' As soon as the boy had gone David rose from his hiding-place and he and Jonathan talked together.

" 'I must go,' said David. 'But wherever I go or whatever I do I shall never forget you or stop loving you. We are friends now and we must be faithful to each other forever.'

"But Jonathan was very sad. He threw his arms about David and wept and said, 'I will be true to you even in death. You are my friend. I have sworn it before God.'

"Then David ran away to the hills where the angry king could not find him but he and Jonathan were friends all their lives."

"Why couldn't we be friends,[10] like that?" said impulsive Simon, laying a warm brown hand on the little boy's shoulder. "You and Andrew and I. Why couldn't we be?"

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[10] *Friendship of Jesus and Simon and Andrew.* These two men were the first of Jesus' disciples. They were with him throughout his ministry and after his death were his most faithful teachers. See Mark 1:16-18.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find Matthew 7:24-7 and read about a house built on a rock. Tell what you think this means.

This is what is called a parable. Try to tell a story in parable form. Find another parable Jesus told. There is a beautiful one about humility. You can find it in Luke 14:6-14. Read it and tell what you think it means.

2. It is probable that Jesus had never seen a boat until he went to Capernaum. Can you imagine what the boat that Andrew and Simon Peter's father had made was like? Look up some pictures of the first boats used by men and compare them with boats of today. Of what were the first boats made? Of what were the sails made? There was a great ship-building center at that time. It was at the city of Tyre. Can you locate Tyre on the map?

3. Find Matthew 4:18-9 and read how Jesus chose Simon and Andrew to be his first disciples. Tell what he said to them.

Things To Do.

1. If there is room on your sand-table model make the Sea of Galilee. Show about how far and in what direction it is from Nazareth. Show how it lies down in a deep valley. Show how the mountains to the east are cut by deep gorges. Show the Jordan river flowing

out of the Sea of Galilee. Place some small boats on the sea. Show where Capernaum was located.

2. Read in 1 Samuel 16:21-23, 1 Samuel 18:10, 11 and 1 Samuel 20 to learn all of the story of Jonathan and David.

Dramatize the story and play it.

In the book, "How the Early Hebrews Lived and Learned" by E. M. Bonser, on pages 236-249 you will find this story already dramatized. It is called "A Royal Friendship." If you wish to do so you may use this play.

The Story the Shepherd Told

Benaniah and the little boy were friends. You might wonder how this could be for Benaniah was a tall, strong, bronzed man, a master shepherd[1] and the little boy was not yet ten years old and knew little about taking care of sheep. That they were friends came about in this way.

"Some people," said Benaniah in his big, booming voice, "think sheep have no sense. True, they do crowd together in a rather stupid fashion. They won't fight but let themselves be eaten without a struggle and they have to be guarded and protected, but they do have sense for they quickly learn their master's voice and their own names and come when they are called."[2]

"Yes," said the little boy gravely. "They know enough to be faithful and gentle and harmless and they give us their wool for our clothes."

"You have an understanding mind," answered Benaniah in admiration. "I will teach you more about sheep. Now I have sheep of my own that know their own names and come when they are called. And that old ram over there," Benaniah pointed to a great old ram with curling horns, "not only knows his own name and comes when I call but he expects the rest to follow him. I can depend upon him. If they do not follow, he makes them."

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[1] *The Master Shepherd.* A master shepherd was one who had charge of or owned great flocks. He had always to serve an apprenticeship under a trained shepherd. He might have other shepherds working under him. See II Kings 3:4.

[2] *The Shepherd and the Sheep.* For a beautiful, figurative description of this relationship, read Psalm 23.

"Your sheep are heavy with wool now. How soon shall we be having the shearing?"[3] The little boy spoke as seriously as though he would be of great help in the shearing. If Benaniah smiled he did not let the little boy see.

"I am sending runners today out to the far hills to tell the shepherds to bring in their flocks.[4] By the time the Sabbath after the new moon[5] is past, they should be here. But there is much to be done before we are ready for them. Let us walk along together to see what is going on at the shearing-house.[6] Perhaps you can make some suggestions that will help me."

The little boy was proud to walk with Benaniah for he wore his red shepherd's coat with gold bracelets on his arm and a gold ring on his finger and carried a long staff.[7] Everyone in Nazareth knew Benaniah and everyone spoke to him as he passed. Some of them whispered among themselves saying, "The shearing will begin soon. Benaniah has come in."

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[3] *The Sheep Shearing.* The sheep shearing came in the spring after the coldest weather was past. It was an annual event of the greatest industrial and social importance, since the chief industry of the people was the production and sale of wool.

[4] *Sent out in Search of Grazing Land.* The flocks were sent out in the care of shepherds to the open lands of hills and valleys and kept there until shearing time. The runner or messenger Benaniah spoke of would be a specially trained young man whose duty it was to carry messages. For another illustration of this service see Esther 3:12-15.

[5] *The New Moon.* The new moon marked the beginning of the month and the first Sabbath. Of course no work would be done until after the Sabbath.

[6] *Shearing-House.* This would be built near water probably outside the town. See II Kings 10:14.

[7] *Marks of His Calling.* The red cloak, the bracelets, the ring and the staff were marks of rank in his calling.

At the shearing-house Benaniah and the little boy found many people at work. There was much shouting and confusion. Some of the men were clearing out the deep pit of water into which each sheep must be dipped to clean its wool before it was sheared. Some were grinding or filing the shears,[8] while some were getting the scales[9] ready to weigh each man's share of wool.

A Publican[10] or two hung about the place as though to make sure that no wool should escape the tax-collector. A water-vender sent out his shrill call, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye buy and drink."

Two or three buyers of wool lingered about just to be sure of getting a first bid in for the new wool. Even the women were there for they must prepare the food for the workers and all must be in readiness for the early comers. Bread must be baked. Wine must be in readiness. Grain must be parched. Figs and raisins and cheese must be supplied. While the sheep that were to be roasted for the shearers must be dressed and laid over the pits of fire for their slow cooking. All seemed happy for they sang as they worked and called back and forth over their tasks.

The little boy's bright eyes saw all that went on for

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[8] *Sharpening Tools.* This was done with a file. See 1 Samuel 13:20-21.

[9] *Scales.* See Genesis 23:16.

[10] *Publicans.* These were tax-collectors. See note, page 134.

Benaniah led him from group to group and explained everything to him.

It was he who first saw a flock of sheep coming across the valley. All that could be seen was a cloud of dust but as they watched, the sheep came in sight. Then they heard the barking of dogs, the calls of the tired, dusty men and the scuffling of many sharp hooves over the rocky earth. It was Jacob, the most distant of the shepherds, who by slow careful marches had brought his sheep first to the shearing-place. With him came the men of his family[11] who had joined him that they might be near to care for their wool and share in the fun and merry making and feasting that always accompanied the shearing.

"Jacob is early with his sheep," Benaniah declared. "Now he will get first place in the shearing, but he must drive his flocks into a fold[12] for tonight for all is not yet in readiness. Shall we go and talk with him? Perhaps he has had some adventure along the way. At least he will be glad to see us for it is lonely business out on the far hills with a flock of sheep."

The little boy felt sorry for the tired hot sheep and thought, "They'll feel better when the shearers have taken away their great coats of wool, poor creatures!"

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[11] *Men of the Clan.* Shearing time marked the gathering of the clans when much visiting and trading took place. For a story of shearing time see 1 Samuel 25:4-12.

[12] *Folds.* These were circular enclosures, sometimes built for permanent use of stone, with compartments for various kinds of stock. But sometimes they were built of brush and guarded by fire at the entrance. The shearing place would doubtless have a permanent fold. Jesus in later life referred to a sheep fold. See John 10:1. From the frequency of his references to sheep and their care in later life, it is certain that the little boy saw much of the industry.

He laughed with happiness when at last all of the flock was safe in the fold with dry grass to eat and plenty of cool water. He helped the shepherd and Benaniah to count them as they went in and found that there were a hundred and sixty sheep in this one flock. No wild beast could get at them now so the shepherds were free for a while to rest and talk with their friends.

It seemed that Jacob had had an adventure. He told about it as they sat in the shade of the fig trees and ate and drank. He was a stooped, thin, little man with a skin burned almost black by the fierce heat of the sun. He did not talk fast or easily but made long pauses between sentences as though he were thinking of the still hills on a dark night when a shepherd must listen for the stealthy step of a hungry wolf or bear or lion which might seize one of the sheep and escape before he could be reached.

"It happened in this way," said Jacob and paused. "I was alone on the hillside for the other men had not drawn close at this time. I was shivering for it is cold in winter when a man has no roof over his head except the stars. My fire had gone low while I dozed. But something wakened me, I know not how.

"I threw more wood on the coals and by the light of the new blaze I saw what seemed at first to be the red dog yonder crouching close to a great rock. I thought it strange that the dog should crouch there in the darkness as though to spring upon my sheep for he looked not at me but at the flock as it lay in the fold of brush next the cliff.

"I called to him and though I had scarce known I was frightened, my voice came forth in a thin squeak too weak to alarm a bird. I was angry at myself. Who was I to be afraid of a shadow? And I felt behind me for my sling that I might place a stone next the creature's flat ears, be he dog or lion.

"But my sling was not under my arm as I always carry it. While I groped in the darkness I felt the first hiss of a desert wind[13] against my face and sprang up quickly. I have not been a shepherd all my life without learning to fear the terrible east winds that blow from the desert lands for they come quickly with such force and carry with them such clouds of dust and sand that a man's sheep may be driven over the cliffs before he knows it.

"The only thing to do is to shelter the sheep in some cleft of the rock or in some cave until the wind dies down. This I hastened to do, forgetting in my hurry, the strange beast.

"By good luck there was such a cave near but not until my sheep were huddled together in it did I think again of the beast that had awakened me. Quickly I counted the sheep. I could not be quite sure but it seemed that one was missing, a small brown ewe called Shamri. But though I called again and again I could hear no answering cry.

"Leaving a fire and the dogs to guard the opening of the cave, I wrapped my cloak about me and started to search for my lost sheep."

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[13] *The Desert Winds.* Almost the most trying climatic condition these people had to endure was the sirocco winds or the continued winds that blew from the deserts to the east. These come quickly. They are both hot and cold. The sand stings and blinds.

"Weren't you afraid of the storm and the wild beasts in the darkness?" asked the little boy.

"Oh, yes, lad. You may be sure I was afraid, but I had been set to guard the sheep and one was missing. What could I do but search for her?

"Then out of the darkness came a call that I knew well, the deep snarling roar of a lion, the hunger call of the hunting beast, and I knew my little Shamri was out there in the dark alone, waiting for me to save her. I knew, too, that it would not be for long that the king of the beasts would await my coming.

"Seizing a brand from my fire I sprang away in the darkness. The wind, risen now to a steady gale, tore at my brand so that it blazed high. Holding it high above my head I ran in ever widening circles about the hill.

"The dust and the sand blinded me. I lost my cloak and my staff. Twice I fell forward on my face only to struggle again to my feet and go on. I kept calling, calling. But the wind carried my voice away down the valley like a lost echo.

" 'Shamri! Shamm-m-ri!' I called.

"Then came a little answering bleat, feeble and low. But it was enough. Swinging my torch I leaped forward. The tawny beast leaning over my Shamri leaped aside, his yellow eyes gleaming in the torch light. They like not fire, these creatures of the far hills. It is to fire only that little Shamri owes her life for she hung under my arm in safety while I, holding the torch before the creature's snarling lips, backed away to the shelter of the cave."

"Not to fire alone, good Jacob," said Benaniah, "but to your courage and faithfulness, as well."

"I told you I was afraid," answered Jacob. "But it was my sheep that was in danger, I could do no less than my best to save her."[14]

Things To Find Out.

1. In what parts of our own country may we still find great flocks of sheep and goats? Do men still shear sheep by hand? What improved methods of cleaning, carding and spinning wool are in use today?

Name some of the uses we make of sheep.

2. In every form of industry we have studied we have found out that today we have better tools and better and easier ways of working. We have more and better food, finer clothes and better homes. Does this mean that we are better people? Is good being worked out more and more? Is man growing towards good in many ways? How can we best help in this growing good? What is the best occupation for anyone? What are *you* going to do when you are grown? Some people one time when beginning to speak to Jesus said, "Good Master." But Jesus stopped them and said, "Why do you call me good? There is none good but God." If God is good as Jesus said He was, are we growing towards God when we work out good ways of living?

3. Find Luke 18:18-19. Read it. Tell where you

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[14] *The Shepherd Saving his Sheep.* Luke 15:4-7. This is Jesus' beautiful parable of the shepherd's care for his sheep.

found it and who wrote it. What do you know about Luke?

Things To Do.

1. Look in Luke 15:3-7 and read the parable of the lost sheep. Tell the story in your own words.

Sing the song, "The Ninety and Nine." Find out who wrote the words and the music.

2. Make a play out of Jacob's story of how he saved Shamri. Some one can be the lion. Some one else can be Shamri. You may do it all in pantomime like a moving picture. Some one may speak the words that are usually thrown on the screen. Make your shepherd's costume and his staff and sling and torch.

A Harvest Feast

THE whole of the village of Nazareth hummed with excitement. The little boy was as eager as anyone. All day long he had run here and there helping anyone who needed help, his mother about her baking, his father with the grain that must be stored in the pits, his small brothers who must learn the songs and prayers for the service in the synagogue, Rabbi ben Ezra who must receive the tithes of first fruits of the harvest for God, even the stranger in the guest-chamber who had come to Nazareth for two days only. The reason that there was so much to be done was that tomorrow was the great feast day, the harvest-home festival,[1] when it was especially commanded that all should rejoice. The barley, the rye, the millet and the wheat were all harvested and stored away for winter's use in great pots set in the earth, in pits and cisterns or in dry wells in the courtyards.

The little boy had watched the whole of the planting and harvest [2] from the day he rode Assep's white ox to the fields and helped scare away the birds from the newly sown land, through the cutting and binding, the threshing and winnowing to the storing away for winter. He saw and loved it all.

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[1] *Feast of Harvest or Feast of Weeks.* This came in the spring on the sixth of the month Sivan, a time that corresponds to our May. It marked the culmination of the grain harvest. The harvest lasted seven weeks. It began with barley and ended with wheat. The entire time was a festive period. All of the able-bodied people joined in the labor of harvest. Certain parts of the grain were left for the poor. See Leviticus 19:9, and 23:10-22. A certain tithe offering was set aside for God's service. For a vivid romantic story of harvest time read the whole of the book of Ruth.

[2] *The Little Boy Watched.* In later life Jesus showed great familiarity with grain and harvest. See Luke 10:2, John 4:35. The parable of the sower, Matthew 13:3.

After the first rains when the ground was soft and damp Assep had scattered his seed. Far and wide he threw it from the skin bag under his arm. The birds got some of it but most of it sank into the waiting earth where the heat of the sun, the dew and the rain, and the air warmed it into greater life. Slowly it grew. First came the slender, green blade like grass; then the bearded ear that was first a tender green then a golden brown. When it was ripe the reapers came with their sickles to cut it and bind it into sheaves. They were careful to leave some grain standing in the corners for the poor who followed after them.

Then the bound sheaves were carried in carts and on donkey-back to the threshing floors[3] where oxen walked on them to separate the wheat from the straw. No one muzzled his oxen for the law commanded that the ox should have his share of the harvest.

Then came the winnowing[4] when the threshed wheat was held aloft in baskets and poured to the ground that the wind might blow away the lighter chaff. And at last came the carrying home and storing away into pots and pits from which the girls and the women could reach it to grind it between the grinding-stones and bake it into loaves of sweet good bread.

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[3] *Threshing.* The threshing floor was a bare, hard, beaten bit of earth outside of the town. The sheaves were laid on the earth and oxen were driven over them to grind out the grain. See Judges 6:11, and II Samuel 24:22.

[4] *Winnowing.* This was the tedious, laborious process by which the grain was separated from the chaff. It was poured from baskets held aloft so that the wind could carry away the chaff.

But, though the men and women did so much hard work to get their bread, they knew that without the earth, the sun, the air and the rain, none of which they could make for themselves but which God alone could give, that there would be no harvest. So in gratitude they held every year this great festival of Harvest Home and gave to God a free-will thank offering. Sometimes this was one-tenth of the entire harvest but often it was more even than this. But before they could give to God they must first pay the heavy tax on all grain to the Romans, their rulers.

Up from the market-place by the fountain, down from the shops and narrow streets, carrying their baskets and skins of threshed wheat the people came on the feast day to the door of the synagogue. Inside, the candles burned in the seven-branched candle sticks over the tiny ark that held the scrolls of the law and the prophets. With a chanted song of thanksgiving,[5] "Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good," they laid their gifts on the altar and repeated their prayers of thanksgiving. Then they were free to separate into family groups and eat of the good things that were ready waiting, at home or in the open places by the fountain. It might be that several families would combine and roast an ox or a sheep whole over the pits of fire. With this roasted meat they might have bread and honey with butter; leeks, cucumbers and onions, with such fruits as ripened early and, of course, wine for this they made from their own grapes.

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[5] *Songs of Thanksgiving.* Psalms 100 and 103.

In the evening when all of the feasting was finished and friends sat together talking and laughing, glad that the harvest was over for another year, some one called, "Tell us a story." And the tall stranger, who had come to Nazareth but the day before and would be gone tomorrow, was appealed to as a matter of courtesy. So he said, "I will tell you a story of the time our people ate bread without harvest or toil, the bread that God sent them straight from heaven." [6]

"Long, long ago," he began, and everyone was very still that he might hear every word, "our people lived in a desert where little food could grow, yet they ate meat and bread and grew strong for God fed them.

"Out of the land of Egypt where they had toiled as slaves, trusting that their great leader, Moses, would soon bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey, they came to this desert place. The food they had brought with them was soon gone. They dared not kill all of their flocks of sheep and cattle. They were tired and thirsty and hungry. The little children cried for food.

"The people whispered complaints among themselves. Then, growing bolder with desperation, they said to Moses, 'Would to God that we had died in Egypt when we sat by the fleshpots when we did eat bread to the full, for ye have brought us forth into this

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[6] *The Story of Manna.* See Exodus 16:4-15.

Wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger.'

"And Moses, trusting in God's promises, said to them, 'God will rain bread from heaven for you. Ye shall go out and gather it. At evening ye shall eat flesh and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread.'

"Still the people complained. Perhaps they did not believe Moses' promise. But at evening time there came a strong wind from the sea carrying with it a multitude of quail, so many that the whole sky was darkened. These the people killed and ate so that they had more meat than they could use. And at morning a heavy dew lay on the ground. When the sun had dried this dew they saw small round drops like hoar frost on the ground. They did not know what it was but whispered to each other, 'What is this? We do not know what this is.'

"Moses said, 'This is the bread which God has given you. Gather it and eat.' And the people ate the bread and found it was very good. Because it was white like coriander seed and sweet like wafers made with honey, they called it manna."

The stranger paused and looked at his eager listeners. Then he went on slowly. "You have feasted today on many good things which your labor has helped bring forth from the ground, yet remember this, God knows your need and He is able to feed you, should your harvest fail altogether, with bread from heaven."

To the little boy, listening there in the warm darkness, God seemed very real and near, a friend who would never forsake him; and heaven a place of loving-kindness and rich gifts for God's chosen people.

Things To Find Out.

1. Try to think of the long slow progress that has been made since Jesus' time in devices that help men to live easier lives. Think also of the patient inventors, puzzling over new ways and sacrificing themselves to find out better ways of doing. Does this seem to you Christian service?

What promise did Jesus make when he was a man to people who give of themselves in such unselfish ways?

Read Luke 6:38 and find out what this promise is.

2. These people had certain very definite laws about how much grain should be left for the poor who had no land of their own. A man might not reap the corners of his fields nor go over his field a second time but must allow whoever wished, to glean after the reapers. Do we today make any such provision for our poor people? What do you think of this plan for helping the poor? Is there a better way?

Do some people still give a tenth of their income to help others?

3. We also have a festival of Harvest Home. What do we call it?

4. Why do we thank God for harvest? Does God do anything to help men to get food? What are some conditions beyond the power of man to control without which there could be no harvest?

5. Why would it be courteous to ask a stranger to tell a story?

Can you make a definition of courtesy? How do you like this one?

> "Politeness is to do and say
> The kindest thing in the kindest way."

6. Find the meaning of the word manna. What are bread fruit trees? Where do they grow? Do you think people would be happier and better off if they could get all of their food without working? What does co-operating with God to get food, mean?

Things To Do.

1. Show on your sand-table model how grain was stored in pits.

2. Make a collection of as many kinds of grain as you can find. What have you that these people did not have? Tell about corn. Where did we get it? Jesus' people called all grain *corn*. But we think of Indian maize as corn.

3. Place some grains of corn or wheat in shallow dishes with a little warm water and place the dishes in the sunshine. Watch to see what happens. What does it take besides seed, water, heat, light and air to make grain grow?

4. After your seeds are softened and beginning to put out small white sprouts, place them in flower pots of earth. Place the flower pots in the sunshine and see what happens. Wheat seeds grow into wheat and corn makes more corn and apple seeds will make an apple tree. But there was a man who lived only a few

years ago who made new kinds of fruit and flowers. Who was he?

Ask some one to tell you about Luther Burbank and his work.

5. The story of Ruth and Naomi and Boaz as it is told in the book of Ruth makes a good play. Dramatize and act this story or parts of it.

When There Was No Rain[1]

In the market-place by the fountain a little group of people sat talking together. They were not so happy as usual because even evening had brought no cooling breeze. The air was dry and full of a heavy dust that clung and irritated them.

A few women waited while their jars filled slowly at the fountain. "There will be no washing tomorrow," one said. "There is no water in the brook and the cisterns have failed long ago. The very earth is cracking open for lack of water. Supposing the fountain should fail?"[2]

"It will not fail," answered another. "It has never failed. It is fed from snowy Mount Hermon yonder. Its strength is drawn from the hills."

"The sun sank clear and red tonight.[3] There will be no rain for many weeks. When the grass in the valleys is gone the sheep will die. The grapes and the olives will wither. There will be no oil and no wine. We shall know famine." The women sighed and fell silent.

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[1] *No Rain.* The greatest fear of the people of Palestine was that the rains would not come in their season. When there was no rain, or only a little rain, there was no grass for the flocks and no grain for the people. This caused terrible suffering. For a vivid description of the suffering caused by drouth read the book of Joel. Read also Genesis 41.

[2] *The Fountain.* In another note on page 39 there is mention of the fountain at Nazareth. It had never been known to fail to supply an abundance of clear cold water. It still supplies water to the people of Nazareth.

[3] *A Red Sky.* It was a superstition that a red sky at evening meant that the next day would be clear. Jesus heard this and repeated it when he was a man. Matthew 16:2.

The little boy, Joshua, did not hear their mournful talk for he had gone with his mother to the crest of the great hill upon whose side Nazareth was built,[4] that he might get a glimpse of the sea. From where they stood the little town looked small and dim, its narrow streets and low houses all but lost in the shadows of the hills. But here they could still see the sun, red as fire, sinking slowly into the blue sea beyond.[5] To the north, line upon line they could see the greater hills crowned by one snowy peak whose crest glowed red in the sunset.[6] Try as they might they could catch no glimpse to the southward of their loved holy city[7] where a golden temple sheltered their God, but they knew that it lay there enthroned among the Judean hills. Here all was coolness and beauty and peace with a sense of freedom and escape from the littleness and troubles of life in the town below. They did not speak but sat quietly watching the stars come out, waiting until the moon should rise over the far desert lands to the east[8] to show them the pathway down the hill to their home.

At last the little boy spoke softly, "Is it true,

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[4] *The Hill.* This is the hill over which criminals were cast. Read Luke 4:29.

[5] *The Sea Beyond.* This was the Mediterranean sea which could be seen in the distance.

[6] *One Snowy Peak.* This was Mount Hermon. It is north of Nazareth. It is 9200 feet high. It forms one of the three sources of the Jordan river. It remains snow covered throughout the summer.

[7] *The Holy City.* This was Jerusalem. The Temple at Jerusalem in Jesus' time was called Herod's Temple.

[8] *The Desert East of Palestine.* This was the Arabian Desert. When the wind blew from the east it carried sand and heat to the land of Palestine.

Mother, that unless the rains come soon we shall have famine and suffering? What is famine?"

"They who fear and complain because the brooks are dry and the cisterns and wells are empty so early are without faith in God, my son," mother answered steadily. "The rains will come in their season. Food shall not fail us. Pray God, little son, that you know not famine. It is the lingering torture of death by starvation. When the rains do not come no fruits or grains ripen. They are burned in the heat of the sun. The beasts gather at the water-holes that are empty and dry and cry their pitiful calls to man for help he cannot give. Old men and women die before their time and little children beg for food."

"Why does God fail to send the rain and the dews, mother?"

"We know not. It may be because of man's sin as in the time of the prophet Elijah or it may be the working out of God's great plan for His chosen people as it was in the time of Jacob whose best loved son was sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt that he might save Israel alive in times of famine."[9]

"Tell me about Elijah, mother. What sin had the people done that they must suffer famine? Was Elijah so great that he could delay the rains or command the storms out of their season?"

"Elijah was, of himself, little, but in God's hands he became a great power. Many years ago there ruled in our land a king called Ahab. He was a brave soldier and a wise ruler. That he might strengthen the kingdom and keep peace with his powerful neighbor to the north, he married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Tyre.

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[9] *God's Plan.* The belief that God had a plan into which all of the events of life fitted for a purpose which should be fulfilled as God pleased was first taught by the great prophet Isaiah. Many people still believe that all events have purpose according to God's plan. Jesus seems so to have believed. See Luke 12:6, 7.

"Ahab worshipped Jehovah, the one true God, but his new wife worshipped Melcart, a strange Baal or Tyrian God.

" 'The god that I worship,' Queen Jezebel said to the king, 'wishes a temple for himself alone. If you love me you will build a temple for him as beautiful as the temple in Jerusalem which your wise king[10] built for Jehovah.'

"And Ahab, loving his queen dearly and wishing to keep the peace with his neighbors, built a great temple to Melcart, and Jezebel with her priests, her friends, and her servants worshipped there.

"Ahab had forgotten that Jehovah had declared himself a jealous god;[11] that He would have no other gods before Him. But there was one man in his kingdom who had not forgotten. This was Elijah, a strange wild man of the highlands, rough and fearless and full of faith in Jehovah. When he learned that a temple to a strange god stood on the sacred soil of his country he was wild with anger and in his anger stood boldly before the king and threatened him.

" 'Because you have done this wicked thing' stormed

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[10] *Temple of the Wise King.* This king was Solomon.

[11] *A Jealous God.* The phrase, "For the Lord thy God is a jealous God" is a part of the fourth commandment. See Exodus 20:5.

Elijah, 'there shall not be dew or rain these years but according to my word.'[12]

"King Ahab laughed and all his courtiers laughed with him. Who was this wild-looking shaggy fellow with his matted beard, his dirty coat of camel's hair and his furious wrath?

"But, though they laughed, they did not quite dare to seize Elijah and throw him into prison. They let him escape to the hills and went on feasting and dancing and fighting as they had done before. Spring came and passed. The almond trees blossomed and the birds sang and built their nests in the green trees, but no rain fell. There was not even a mist or a heavy dew such as sometimes took the place of rain. The farmers complained that the grass was dry and thin, that the flocks would go hungry soon, but King Ahab and Queen Jezebel were happy and undisturbed.

"Then the autumn came and passed and still there was no rain, no mist or heavy dew. The whole land lay bare and parched. The rivers became tiny brooks. The wells were empty of all but a little brackish water, the grain was parched by the heat. The people complained bitterly but still Queen Jezebel worshipped her god, her thousand priests flaunted themselves before Jehovah's people.

"Even in the hills to which Elijah had fled there was little food and Elijah himself searched far and wide for water and bread.

"The second autumn passed and still there was no rain. In his silent mountain home God spoke to Elijah in a dream[13] and said, 'Go, show thyself unto Ahab and I will send rain.' "

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[12] *Elijah's Threat.* A full and intensely dramatic account of Elijah's encounter with the Syrian priests may be found in 1 Kings 18.

Mother paused and the little boy spoke softly, "Was Elijah afraid of the king?"

"Yes, I believe he was afraid. But God spoke to him and he took courage and went once more. But Ahab was not now a laughing king. His face was dark with anger and his voice was cold. Yet deep down in his heart he too was afraid. How much power had this man who claimed to speak for Jehovah? Not much surely. And yet the rains had not come as he had threatened. The king no longer dared refuse to listen. Now Elijah was speaking again.

" 'Hear, oh King,' he said. 'In your heart you know that Jehovah is God, the one true God of all the world. If this long famine has not proved this to you let us try still another test, a test that shall leave no room for doubt.'

" 'Speak on,' said the king roughly.

" 'Command, oh King, that thy servants build on the top of Mt. Carmel an altar to Jehovah and one to Melcart, this Syrian Baal. It is a sacred place. Let the priests of each god prepare a sacrifice and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God.'

"Jezebel, listening, shook with anger.

" 'Let us try, oh King, which of these be the true God.'

"And Ahab, torn between his faith in Jehovah and his love for his queen said, 'Let the trial take place.'

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[13] *God Spoke in a Dream.* This was usually the way men received messages from God. 1 Kings 3:5. Matthew 1:20.

"Then there came forth four hundred and fifty priests of Baal to build his altar and offer the sacrifice but for Jehovah there was Elijah alone. One man before four hundred and fifty. Then the Syrian priests built an altar and laid on it the bullocks for the sacrifice. They put no fire under it, but called on their god from morning until noon saying, 'O Baal hear us.' But there was no voice nor any that answered. Then Elijah mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud for he is a god. Either he is talking or he is pursuing or he is taking a journey or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.'

"But, though they cried unto him until evening, there was no voice nor answer nor any sign that their God heard them.

"Then Elijah built his altar and laid upon it his sacrifices but put no fire under the sacrifice. He even poured water over the sacrifice and in the trench about the altar. Then he said, 'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant and that I have done these things in thy name. Hear me O Lord. Hear me, that this people may know that thou art God.'

"Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it they fell on their faces and said, 'The Lord, He is God. He is God.'

"And Elijah said unto Ahab, 'Get thee up, eat and drink for there is the sound of abundance of rain.' And it came to pass that the heaven was black with clouds and wind and there was a great rain."

The story was finished. Mother and the little boy started slowly down the hill towards home picking their way over the rough pathway. Each was thinking earnestly of the deeper meaning of the old tale that had come down to them as a legend of their people. Before they reached the streets mother said, "The need for faith in God is as great today as it was in the time of King Ahab and God answers today as He did then, the call of the true believer."

But the little boy was thinking too earnestly to make an answer.

Things To Find Out.

1. What do men do today to make it possible to raise grain and fruit in desert places where no rain falls?

Name one great reservoir in the west that waters desert land.

What is the Boulder Dam project?

There is also an improved way of farming dry land. What is it? How does it differ from ordinary farming?

2. What is a legend? Can you think of one? Is the story of Sleepy Hollow a legend? How does this story of Elijah and the Syrian priests differ from an ordinary legend? What great truth does this story teach?

3. There is another most interesting story of man's skill and ability to overcome drouth. You may find it in the last part of the book of Genesis. Read the forty-first chapter.

Things To Do.

1. Read 1 Kings 18 and tell the story of Elijah and the Syrian priests in your own words. It is very dramatic and would make a splendid play. Dramatize it if you like.

2. Collect some pictures of great dams such as Roosevelt dam and tell the story of how and why they were built.

Tell about the Nile river and how some of the people of Egypt irrigate their land by means of dams in the river.

3. Collect some pictures of desert lands. If you have room on your sand-table make a desert and show an oasis in it. Make a desert home and some figures of people. Show how their clothing protects them from the heat and sand.

A Pilgrim

THE stranger who had reached Nazareth on the Sabbath eve had slept in the guest-chamber but was awake and ready for the service in the synagogue on the Sabbath morning.

No one could be quite certain as to just how important this stranger might be. True, he was tall and looked commanding, but his cloak was old and not altogether clean or whole. His eyes were dark, deep-set under beetling brows; his beard was long and beginning to be gray; his cheeks were brown and wrinkled. But his voice was deep and kindly and when he smiled those about him forgot everything except that they would like to stay near him and listen carefully to all that he might have to say.

He might not be a prince, they thought, for princes did not travel alone or wear shabby clothing. He might not be a king's emissary though there was something wonderfully mysterious and important about him. He was certainly not a rich man or a great Rabbi. What could he be?

The little boy, Joshua, had the best chance to find out all about him for as they came out of the synagogue at the close of the service, the stranger laid his arm across his shoulder and walked along beside him and father Joseph.

"I have lived long and travelled many roads," he said. "There is little that men call wisdom that I have not examined or of misfortune that I have not endured. But here in Nazareth I have found a strange peace."

"How may that be?" answered father Joseph, keeping fast hold of the little boy's hand. "Nazareth is but a poor place for world travellers though all are welcome. Enter if you will and break the Sabbath bread with us. Perhaps, since you say your heart is at peace, you will be able to tell us that which will set our hearts at rest."

As they sat around the table and dipped their bread in the dish the stranger said, "I am but lately come from Persia where, though I am a Jew, I have dwelt for many years. I am Arak, the son of Arak, he who dreamed dreams[1] and obtained of God, understanding."

The little boy, listening, felt a strange thrill. His bright eyes gazed intently into the dark glowing eyes of the stranger. Here was one, he thought, who might know the meaning of thoughts too deep for words, of feelings that tore at the heart but could not be uttered; of strange wild forces that pulled at one's very being but could not be satisfied by anything one had ever heard or done.

"Speak on," said father Joseph, glancing at the little boy. “But remember that words spoken in lightness may kindle deathless fires. Wisdom is a torch to light men’s feet, but won too early, it may but dazzle their eyes.”

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[1] *Dreams.* Primitive man believed that God communicated with man by means of dreams and visions; that all dreams had a meaning and that a man who could interpret dreams was a wise man favored of God. For example, Joseph won favor with the Pharaoh by the interpretation of his dreams. See Genesis 40:5-8.

The book of Daniel, to which the child Jesus had access, is full of dreams and visions. For the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream by Daniel, see Daniel 2:1, 2, 3.

For the belief that the spirit of God was conveyed to man through dreams, see Joel 2:28.

“I comprehend,” said the stranger and paused.

“There are many legends among our people and the wise of other peoples,” he went on after a little, “which teach us the same great truth. That truth is, that though a man has hands and feet, ears that hear, eyes that see and a tongue with which to speak, he is something more than these or anything these can comprehend. What that something more is he is always groping to find out.

“He may hear the birds singing, feel the warmth of the sunshine, see the beauty of the earth, its ordered power and greatness, yet feel in his own heart that there is more even than these if he but knew how to find it.”

“A secret,” said the little boy, hardly knowing that he spoke, “a secret each one must find out for himself.”

“The child speaks,” said the stranger. “We would do well to listen.”

But the little boy was silent.

“Men have had many different ideas as to what this secret might be,” the stranger went on. “King Solomon believed it to be wisdom, an understanding heart.[2] We read of him, when he was crowned king of Israel with all wealth and power at his command, going humbly apart to a solitary place and there praying God in a dream that he might have an understanding heart to judge his people wisely. Why should a great king kneel humbly and beg some unseen power for wisdom? Who told him of this unseen power?

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[2] *Solomon’s Dream.* For the story of this see 1 Kings 3:5-15.

"Another great thinker found that the secret meant for him something like this.[3]

'The law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of Jehovah is trustworthy, making wise the simple,
The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart,
The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever.
The judgments of Jehovah are true and altogether just.
They are of more value than gold, yea than much fine gold;
Sweeter than honey and the droppings of the honey comb.
By them is thy servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.'

"Still another wise man has written of it in these words,[4] 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, "I have no pleasure in them." The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man.'

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[3] *A Wise Man's Faith.* This is David's declaration of faith, the outcome of his best wisdom. Psalm 19:7-11.

[4] *Advice of Another Wise Man.* This is part of a beautiful poem indicating the part of wisdom. See Ecclesiastes 12.

"But all of these are *about* the secret. None of them *is* the secret. When that is known men shall have power and peace.

"But I, poor as I am and ignorant, have had a vision.[5]

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[5] *The Vision.* From the earliest times of which we know men have tried to solve the mystery of their lives. From where do we come? Where do we go after this life? Why do we live? Shall we live again after death? It has always seemed as though we would be happier if we could know the answer to these questions. The answer to them is what the little boy, Joshua, called, "the secret."

The people of Jesus' time and race in particular were mystics. Their prophets, the real leaders in thought, asked questions and had mysterious answers. An oracle is an answer in mystical terms. In this mystical language a stone had a peculiar meaning. Jesus was called a corner stone, i.e., the chief foundation stone, of the church. Daniel 2:45.

He was also called a precious stone. 1 Peter 1:20.

He was also called a living stone. I Peter 2:2-6.

He was also called a stone with seven eyes. Zachariah 3:9.

The white stone was a symbol of forgiveness and a reward. It was given to one who won in games or who was acquitted after a trial. See Revelation 2:17.

Jesus is said to have said, "Raise the stone, there thou shalt find me. Cleave the wood and there I am." Oxyrhynchus Pamphlets.

The Oxyrhynchus Pamphlets are a part of some papers found by two English explorers, Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Hunt. In 1897 these two men were looking over some piles of old, old rubbish near a little town called Oxyrhyn one hundred and twenty-three miles south of Cairo in Egypt. Among other interesting things they found some papyrus leaves full of inscriptions. When these were translated they were found to contain what was claimed to be more sayings of Jesus. That is, more than are printed in the Bible.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke has written a beautiful poem based on the idea as expressed above. It is called "The Toiling of Felix."

It concerned the secret. I seemed to sleep yet was awake. In my vision I saw a stone, flat and large. It seemed to lie lightly upon the earth. A voice said to me, 'Lift the stone.'

"It seemed a simple thing to do yet when I stooped to obey I found that I could in nowise move it from its place. Though I struggled with my full strength I could not more than thrust my fingers under its edge.

"In my vision I called my comrades to my help and together we struggled to lift the stone. No mere strength of man's body seemed enough.

"Then a magician came to my aid. 'A charm must be repeated over the stone,' he said. So he spoke a form of words, a ritual, that because of its rhythms, its symbols and its mystic character should have lifted the stone. But it was of no effect though some who watched, believed that the stone trembled. They are among those who believe that if only the right words could be found we should know the secret.

"When the magician failed I grew discouraged and sat down to think and while I thought a man came by and asked me why I sat so sadly by the way. I explained to him my trouble. I pointed out the stone and told him how strength and magic had both failed to move it. I asked him to help me for I believed that if I could but once raise the stone I should be satisfied with some great good.

"But when I had finished he only stared at me in amazement and said, 'What are you talking about? I see no stone. You are imagining things. There is no stone.' And he went away laughing. He is among those who feel no hidden meaning nor long for any greater good than we now have.

"Then in my vision there came by a thoughtful man who said, after he had listened to my story, 'The stone is but the symbol of your body. It is not real. Your desire and faith are the reality. Believe that you can lift the stone and you will have the power and good that you long for.' [6]

"But before I could do this the vision passed. I awoke. There was no stone and no group of curious people. What do you think was the meaning of the vision?"

"I am an unlettered man," father Joseph answered. "I know not how to interpret visions. What do you think of it, yourself?"

"I know not unless it meant that there is some good, some meaning, some power to be had to which man will sometime find his way. What think you, lad? Am I right?" said the stranger, smiling down at the little boy.

Things To Find Out.

1. Find the meaning of the word *oracle*.

Have some one ask you a question and answer it in an oracular manner. E.g. Question. Shall I get a high mark on my examination paper?

Oracular Answer. He who tries hard shall succeed through trying.

What was the Delphic Oracle?

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[6] *The Power of Faith.* In later life Jesus believed in the power of faith. See Matthew 17:20.

Have you ever felt that there is a great mystery about life you would like to understand?

2. Find the Book of Daniel and read the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and how Daniel interpreted it.

3. Who wrote the poem beginning, "The law of the Lord is perfect?" Find the 19th Psalm and read it.

4. Read the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes and talk it over with your teacher. What do you think the symbols mean?

Things To Do.

1. Make a guest-chamber on the roof of some house you have made in your sand-table model of Nazareth. Furnish it as you think it might have been furnished in the days when Jesus was a child.

2. Memorize the poem found in the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes.

3. Memorize the poem beginning, "The law of the Lord is perfect."

The Most Joyous Feast

"WHERE are you going, Sirach?" asked the little boy. And then without waiting for an answer, "May I go with you? Please, Sirach, let me go."

Sirach looked down kindly. He was a tall man with a sturdy brown body. He laughed at the little boy's eagerness, throwing back his head and opening his mouth wide so that he showed his white teeth.

"I am going to the olive orchards. It is time to gather the fruit. But I go only to show the others how to work. Do you want to help the women and girls?"

"I will help beat the trees," said the little boy. "That is man's work. I can climb too. I will climb the trees and shake the branches. Do say I may come, good Sirach."

"Come along then," Sirach answered still laughing. "That is, if your father has no objections. A man must be master in his own house, eh, good Joseph? Even at ingathering time the men must be obeyed?"

"The lad is safe with you, Sirach?" asked father Joseph.

"As safe as my own babes, friend. I will bring him back at evening after we have stripped the trees and he has seen the yellow oil pouring from the press."[1]

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[1] *Olive Industry*. The manufacture of oil from the olive constituted one of the main industries of the people of Palestine at this time. Some oil was exported. It was used as a food and for lighting purposes, also in the religious rituals in the Temple and synagogues.

"Go then, my lad. But remember to help in every way you can."

It seemed to the little boy, as he skipped along beside Sirach, that all of the people of Nazareth must be going out to pick olives. Everywhere he looked he saw men and women, girls and boys with baskets and carts. Some carried long poles with which to beat the trees. Some carried jars and skin bottles in which they expected to carry home some of the new oil. Some carried shears and knives.

"What need have they of knives?" he asked.

"Not all of these go to the olive trees, boy. Some go instead to the vineyards to cut the grapes and bear them to the wine press or spread them out to dry for raisins.[2] See yonder bare-legged boys? They will tread the juice from the grapes when they are thrown into the vats. Their legs will be well spattered you may be sure. It does seem as though a great many people were

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The trees were beaten with long poles to loosen the fruit and bring it to the ground from where it was gathered in baskets and skins. It was then poured into a circular stone pit and a weight rolled over it to extract the oil. This weight was a sort of millstone set on edge, run like a wheel around a central pivot, by a shaft. This crushed the fruit, seeds and all. It was then carried to the press. Some traces of these presses have been found in Palestine by explorers. See "Archaeology and the Bible" by Barton. Page 137.

[2] *The Grape.* Wine was another main product of Palestine at this time. The grape season began in July or the month of Ab and lasted until October or Tishri. Figs, pomegranates, apricots and almonds also ripened during this time.

The same law against gleaning of the vineyards as about a final beating of the trees was observed. See Deuteronomy 24:21.

The wine press was a vat cut in the solid rock. As the juice was trodden out by the feet of men and boys it ran into a deeper portion of the vat. It was stored in jars and skins. In the story of the wedding at Cana the wine was in jars. See John 2:1-10. Jesus refers to the use of skin bottles for wine in the parable of the old and new bottles. See Matthew 9, 17.

going out. But what of that? We shall be all the merrier."

It was late summer in Nazareth. The wheat and barley harvest had been long over. The sheep shearing was finished and the shepherds had gone back to the hills with their flocks. People who had gone to Jerusalem to attend the Passover had returned. The first flowers and green grass of spring had faded into dull browns. The dust lay heavy and white over everything.

But outside the town in the valleys and on the hillsides the twisted, bent, old, gray-green olive trees hung full of ripe fruit and the vines lay low on the earth, heavy with purple grapes.

For many days men had been at work on the oil presses and the wine vats to make them clean. Now they waited to see that each group of people who came with fruit had a fair chance to use them for there was only one oil press and one wine vat for many people.

It had been long since the rains and the whole earth lay dry and hot, cracked here and there into deep gullies. The Day of Atonement and the civil new year were near at hand[3] and after them would come the Feast of Tabernacles when offerings would be made to God, of water and wine, that the rains would come soon in abundance when seed might again be planted.

But first the oil must be made and stored away, for without oil there would be no lights for the feast, no Sabbath lamps or sacred anointings, none for food even, for a whole year. And the grapes, those that had not already been eaten half ripe, must be pressed into wine or dried into raisins. Other fruits and vegetables must be gathered, figs and pomegranates and apricots, onions and lentils and cucumbers, while nuts must be picked and stored. All this must be done that they might have food for the long months when the earth would lie beaten by the winter rains.

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[3] *Civil New Year and the Day of Atonement.* The civil new year came on the first of Tishri, the seventh month. It corresponds to our September 12. The Day of Atonement began on the tenth of Tishri.

There was work for everyone, happy joyous work under the warm blue sky out in the open fields. The people could almost forget about the hated tax-collectors[4] and the Roman over-lords as they brought their produce to market to exchange it for a length of woven cloth for a new cloak or a pair of leather sandals.

Very soon Sirach and the little boy left the town far behind them and were out on the trail that led over the hills to the olive orchards. Groups of girls and women and boys passed them on the way laughing and chattering. One of these was made up of Sirach's wife and his five tall brown daughters who were glad to see the little boy and carried him along with them to the first trees which happened to belong to Sirach. They were only three but they were old and large and full of the dark purplish olives, ripe and rich and sweet.

Here other men and boys joined them and together they beat and shook the trees until they were almost bare while the women and girls filled their baskets. The sun climbed higher and higher and grew hotter and hotter until it was time for the morning meal and the mid-day rest.

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[4] *Tax Collectors.* The tax on landed property was one-tenth of all grain and one-fifth of all wine and fruit, paid partly in fruit and partly in money. This was, however, only a small part of the taxes the people paid as a whole. See page 134 of this book.

It was while they sat eating that a group of pilgrims came walking from the south and sat down to rest for a while with the jolly workers. They were sun-burned and travel-worn. They had come from Jerusalem through Samaria and were on their way to Damascus.

There was one among them who looked neither tired nor travel-stained. It was he who told them where they had been and where they were going. He sat erect eating and drinking sparingly from his own scrip.[5]

The little boy crept close to him and sat in silence as though waiting to hear something of great importance.

Presently the stranger noticed him and said, "What is your name, lad?"

"I am Joshua, the son of Joseph and Mary. My home is in Nazareth yonder."

"Ah," said the stranger. "Have you ever heard of the learned Rabbi of that name who danced within the Temple courts at the Feast of Tabernacles with eight torches in his hand yet without letting one touch the pavement?"

"No," said the little boy wonderingly. "I never did. Please tell us about him. Do the learned Rabbis dance in the Temple courts?"

"Just that, lad and more too, for very happiness. It happens every year when the Feast of Tabernacles is observed.[6] Then all mourning and fasting are forbidden and all the priests of all the courses[7] sing the Hallel each morning at the Temple service to the music of trumpets and harps and cymbals while all the people, carrying palm and citron branches, march round the reading desk and join in the singing.[8]

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[5] *Scrip.* A bag in which food and small articles might be carried. See Luke 9:3 and Luke 22:35-6.

"It is done in memory of that time so long ago when God had delivered His chosen people from slavery to the Egyptians and they dwelt for so long in tents and booths in the Wilderness, a free and happy people.

"It is bound up too with this joyous time of Ingathering of the fruits and with prayers and water libations to God that He will send the rains for another harvest. It crowns the year of toil with thanksgiving and recognizes God as Him who makes possible all good in the earth."

Some of the olive pickers were asleep, tired out with their hard work, but Sirach and the little boy were wide awake and listening.

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[6] *Feast of Tabernacles.* This feast began on the fifteenth of Tishri. It is also called the Feast of Ingathering and has associated with it rites of water and wine or libations which were prayers for rain in its season. The rainy season began soon after the harvest of fruit and oil.

[7] *Priests.* Josephus is the authority for the statement that there were in the service of the Temple at this time some twenty thousand priests. These did not all live in Jerusalem nor serve in the Temple at the same time but were on call, as it were, for service in their turn. For purposes of convenience the priests were divided into Courses. There were twenty-four Courses. Each Course bore a distinctive name. E.g., Zachariah belonged to the Course, Abia. See Luke 1:5-22.

About fifty priests served in the Temple each day of the week while on the Sabbath the whole Course might serve. To insure justice each priest had his part in the service assigned by lot.

[8] *All of the People.* This meant only the men and the boys. For the origin of the feast, see Leviticus 23:34-44. For directions as to the booths, see Nehemiah 8:15-16.

"Tell more," begged the little boy. "Tell all about the service in the great Temple. Oh, I wonder if I ever shall see it? It seems so long to wait until I shall be thirteen."

"I saw it first when I was a lad but little older than you. It is very beautiful and never more beautiful than at the Feast of Tabernacles. Other times may be sad or awesome or thrilling but this is pure gladness and joy."

"Begin at the beginning," begged the little boy.

The stranger laughed. "Well then, small Joshua, it begins in this way. Very early in the morning of the fifteenth day of Tishri great numbers of men and boys go outside of the city and cut green boughs of trees, olive and pine, myrtle and palm. These they bear back to the city, singing as they go along. Out of the thick green boughs they build booths for themselves on roofs, in the courts, on the streets and near the market-place. These are to be their homes for seven days.

"On the morning of the first day of the feast a great procession, led by a priest dressed all in white and carrying a golden flask, walks from the Temple to the Pool of Siloam where the flask is filled with water. Then the shouting, chanting procession returns to the Temple and is greeted by three men blowing on ram's horns.

"Here another priest, bearing a golden flask of wine, joins the first and together they pour the wine and the water into golden basins as an offering to God. This is a prayer for rain in its season.[9] Then the sweet singers chant hymns of rejoicing[10] while the people march about waving their green branches.

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[9] *The Libations of Water.* See 1 Samuel 7:6 for the antiquity of

"In the evening great lights[11] are set up in the Temple court. These are formed by tall pillars filled with oil in which wicks, made of the priest's linen garments, are thrust. When they are lighted all Jerusalem lies bathed in their glory. While they burn an orchestra of harps, lutes, cymbals and trumpets plays from the Temple steps while holy men dance before the lights with flaming torches held aloft.

"The splendor of that scene, the golden Temple shining in the torch light; the white-robed singers chanting the songs on the steps; the deep throbbing of the harps and cymbals; the wide effulgence of the lights through the dark streets, gave me a sense of God's presence and power and goodness I can never forget. The feast will be going on again soon but I shall be far away," the stranger ended sadly. "Far, far away."

"But I shall go some day and see it all," the little boy cried exultingly. "Some day I shall see the golden Temple of God."

Things To Find Out.

1. The word Gethsemane means, olive garden. Where in the Bible is the Garden of Gethsemane mentioned? What happened there?

2. Do we get olive oil from Palestine today? What

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this custom. Read also in this connection Jesus' words found in John 7:37-8.

[10] *Chanted Songs.* These were Psalms 120-134.

[11] *The Lights.* It is thought that Jesus referred to these lights when he spoke the words found in John 7:12.

other countries export olive oil? Tell what you can about the olive tree. How do the new trees come?

3. Find Leviticus 23:34-44 and read about how the Feast of Tabernacles was first begun. Find Nehemiah and read about the directions for making the booths.

4. Tell the story of the water libations. What did pouring the water on the ground symbolize?

5. What did the little boy mean by saying, "I can hardly wait until I am thirteen?"

6. What were the torches the dancers held in their hands like? When we wish a special illumination what do we use?

7. Who first discovered electricity? Tell how he did it. Who are some other discoverers and inventors in the field of electricity?

Has anyone succeeded in drawing electricity directly from the air in quantities enough for great power? Do you imagine that will be done some day? Would you like to serve others by discovering some great good such as this would be?

Things To Do.

1. Look for pictures of olive trees. Tell what they are like.

2. Read Matthew 26:36. This will tell you about the Garden of Gethsemane.

3. At the Feast of Tabernacles the priests sounded the trumpets. What is a trumpet? Can you tell some other musical instruments they had?

The Passover

Each year in the spring when groups of pilgrims passed through Nazareth on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover[1] the little boy would ask eagerly if he might go with them.

It was such a joyous happy time. The whole land was full of the beauty and life of springtime. Shade trees were in full leaf, fresh and green. Fruit trees were in bloom. The birds were building their nests, singing their sweetest songs while they worked. The hills were covered with wild flowers. The streams, so dry and bare for the greater part of the year, ran full and clear after the rains.

"When may I go, mother?" the little boy begged. "I do so want to go with you and father Joseph. I've never been on a long journey. I've never seen a large city. I do so want to see the Temple and learn more about the ways of worshipping there."

But mother looked doubtful. "It is a long journey, son. You would be very tired. When you are thirteen you may go for then you will be old enough to become a Son of the Law.[2] But until then it is best that you stay quietly here at home with the other children.

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[1] *Time of the Passover.* The Passover celebration came on the 14th of Nisan or Abib. Our corresponding time would be late March or early April. The first of Nisan marked the beginning of the sacred year. See Exodus 23:15.

[2] *A Son of the Law* or *A Son of the Commandments.* At the age of thirteen the properly taught Jewish child became a Son of the

"There is much that can be done here to celebrate the glad Passover time,"[3] she added seeing the disappointment in his face. "You are still such a little boy. There will be time enough for you to see the great city and the Temple when you are older."

"I will be twelve years old next year," said the little boy proudly. "Wouldn't it be wise for me to go then so that I might learn more about what is expected of a Son of the Law?"

Mother smiled at his eagerness. She would have liked to have him with her always.

"We shall see," she promised. "I will talk with your father Joseph and with Rabbi ben Ezra. It may be that they will think it wise for you to go when you are twelve. All boys are not the same. Some are wise and good beyond their years. You are to be trusted. You have a loving understanding. But be content to stay here at home for a little longer. Who knows what is to come?"

The little boy made no answer but his face shone again. After a while he said, "I will wait since you think it best but please tell me again the story of the

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Law. He was presumed to be familiar with the law as laid down in the Pentateuch and to be obedient to it. That Jesus knew and reverenced the Jewish law is evidenced by his own words. See Matthew 5:17, 18.

[3] *Home Celebration of Passover.* The Passover is often celebrated in devout Jewish homes in a simplified form. No sacrifice is made, but the head of the family conducts the service as the priest of his own household. The children and women are present. One of the children asks, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" and so gives occasion for the father to explain the significance of the occasion. The singing of the Hallel (Psalms 113, 114) is a part of the ceremony.

Passover when the Angel of Death passed by the first-born of Israel but paused in every Egyptian home and claimed the first-born of each for his own."[4]

"It is an old story, son. You have heard it many times. But I will tell it again. We who have been free all our lives cannot know the misery and shame of slaves."[5] So the story began.

"Hundreds of years ago our forefathers dwelt in this land but there came a time when the rains failed. No rain came nor any dews to cause the grass to grow.[6] After a long time our people were compelled to go down into Egypt where a wise man, one of our own race called Joseph, had foreseen the famine and saved in the plentiful years enough to feed all, through the famine years. Our people went to Egypt that they might not perish.

"For a time they were happy and prosperous. But the Pharaoh who had befriended Joseph died and a new Pharaoh came to the throne. He did not need Joseph nor honor him. Instead he commanded that all of the Hebrew people living in Egypt should become slaves. He compelled them to toil in his stone quarries; to make his brick; to build his walls and his cities;

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[4] *The Story.* The whole story of the Passover will be found in Exodus 12.

[5] *Slaves.* Slavery as it was practiced among the Jews at the time of Jesus was not very extensive or severe. For a description of the laws concerning slavery read Exodus 21:2-4, and Deuteronomy 15:12-27. Jesus knew of the institution of slavery and referred in later life to the punishment of slaves. See Matthew 25:30 and Luke 12:46. In the countries about Palestine slavery was carried on in its most debasing and shameful extremes.

[6] *Famine Due to Drouth.* For the story of Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream and a description of the famine, see Genesis 41. See chapter 46 for an account of Jacob's journey to Egypt.

to suffer under the stinging lash of the overseers; to have no freedom or joy in their own labor but to remain poor and ignorant with no hope or chance of anything better to come. This went on for four hundred years. There seemed no end to the misery and disgrace.

"Then God heard their prayers and brought it to pass that one of their little ones became the adopted son of a princess. She called him Moses for she had saved him from the water.[7] She reared and educated him in the Pharaoh's palace. He became wise in the learning of the Egyptians and skilled in their laws and subtleties but his heart remained true to his own people. In the end he wrested them from the Pharaoh and guided them to this fair and lovely land in which we now live.

"But even Moses could never have gotten them out of Egypt had he not had God's supreme guidance and continuing help. Though he was brave beyond others, skilled in the arts of the necromancer even more than the king's most skilled men; though he knew the law and had confidence in the justice of his cause, he would still have failed without God. When at last all threats and pleadings had failed, all wonders and plagues had been endured; when the haughty Pharaoh had turned from him for the last time in refusal of his plea, Moses said in just anger, 'Thus saith the Lord. About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that sitteth behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there were none like it nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel not a dog shall move his tongue that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall bow down themselves unto me saying, "Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee." And after that I will go out.'[8]

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[7] *Moses Saved by a Princess.* The account is given in full in Exodus 2:1-10.

"Then Moses talked to his own people and said, 'Take a lamb from among the first-born of your flocks and kill it. Dip a piece of hyssop in its blood and strike the lintel and the two side posts of your doors with it. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel and the side posts of your doors He will pass over your door and not allow the Destroyer to come in. Then ye may roast the flesh of the lamb and eat it but eat it standing, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand for you must be ready to go out. Eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Eat in haste and leave no part uneaten. And this ye shall do each year as long as you live as a memorial of this time.'

"And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon and all the first-born of cattle.

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[8] *Moses' Words.* The words quoted here may be found in Exodus 11:4-8.

"And Pharaoh rose up in the night he and all his servants, and the Egyptians and there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

"And he called for Moses by night and said, 'Rise up and get ye forth from among my people both ye and the children of Israel. Go and serve the Lord as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds as ye have said and be gone. And bless me also.'[9]

"So," mother went on after a little, "our people escaped out of Egypt. And to this day we celebrate the Passover as Moses directed in memory of that wondrous time. When you do go up to Jerusalem with the pilgrims, you will see the lambs sacrificed on the altar, join in the songs of thanksgiving and praise and the prayers of gratitude, and know that we are faithful to that God who saved us alive out of slavery. Keep these things in your heart, my son, for the God who saved us from slavery still lives and He is able to save us from sin and sorrow."

"Does He not still need brave wise men like Moses to help him?" asked the little boy.

"In whatever peril and need men have ever been, God has saved them through the help of some brave wise man or woman," answered mother. "He works but we must work too and keep ourselves in readiness to cooperate with Him. No great good can come to man without man's help."[10]

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[9] *The Pharaoh's Words.* These may be found in Exodus 12:30-32.

Things To Find Out.

1. The law which a Son of the Law was expected to know well at the age of thirteen was the law of Moses as found in the first five books of the Old Testament. This law was, in its turn, based upon a much older law called "The Code of Hammurapi or Hammurabi." This older law dates from the first dynasty of Babylon. It is the oldest known code of law in the world; one thousand years older than the Mosaic law.

In a book called "Archaeology of the Bible" by Mr. George Barton, page 313, you can find this older law compared with the Mosaic law. Find them and see for yourself how the two laws differ. It is altogether possible that Moses knew the older law very well since he was a well-educated man.

2. Find Exodus 12 and read the story of the first Passover.

3. Learn somewhat of the history of slavery in our own country. Why did we think it wrong to have slaves?

Did Jesus say anything when he was a man to make us think it wrong to enslave our fellow-men? Read Matthew 7:12.

4. What do you know about the Egyptians? Were they a highly civilized people? What are some dif-

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[10] *Working with God.* In this connection we think of the poet's words, "Not God himself could make Antonio Stradivari's violins without Antonio."

ferences between civilized and uncivilized peoples?

5. Find out who wrote the words quoted in note ten, page 230.

Things To Do.

1. After you have read the story of the Passover tell it in your own words to your class. The Passover was a memorial day for the Jewish people. Have we any memorial days? Tell about them.

2. The Hallel, or Psalms 113-118, were made into songs of rejoicing. See if you can set parts of them to music and sing them. Compare your song with one of our well-known songs of rejoicing such as, "Hail Columbia."

3. Learn the quotation found in note ten on page 230. Tell what you think it means. Name one great man who seems to you to have helped God to do some important work. Did God have to have a man to help Him?

On the Way to Jerusalem

THE years went by swifter and swifter. Every year the little boy had grown taller and stronger. Every year he had learned more and more about the law, his trade of carpentering and the history of his people until the time had come when he could go with father Joseph and mother to the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem.

In another year he would be thirteen years old and become a 'Son of the Law' but now, since he was twelve and tall and wise and thoughtful, he was allowed to go to Jerusalem and learn what he could. The thought of the long journey filled him with happiness. It was more than eighty miles to Jerusalem, the way they would go, and they would have to walk every step of the way. They would camp out at night and eat from their bags of food which they would take from home. There would be company, plenty of it, relatives and friends and strangers too, no doubt, from whom he could learn much.[1] There would be new sights and new people but best of all there would be Jerusalem, the wonderful holy city; the Temple all shining and glorious; the songs of rejoicing and the stately white-robed priests offering the sacrifices. Father Joseph had talked with him about all of these things[2] but of the journey he had said little and it was the journey that came first.

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[1] *The Journey.* The annual journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover was one of the most joyous occasions in the lives of the people. Great numbers of people came from all parts of the country. There was singing, and music of the flute. A deep gladness prevailed. The prophet Isaiah refers to this happy time. See Isaiah 30:29.

It was dark in the valley when they started, for the sun had not yet risen over the great hills that lay around Nazareth. The almond trees were in bloom and their whiteness glowed in the starlight. It was cool and the streams in the valley ran full from the spring rains. The road wound round the hills downward towards the valley of the great river.[3] The little boy walked beside mother, full of a deep quiet happiness, as one who goes at last towards that of which he has dreamed for a long time.

He could hear Abash and Benaniah, the shepherd, talking about the road. "There is another road," Abash was saying, "better than this narrow rough path. It's a pity we couldn't go by it."

Benaniah laughed. "That would lead us through the land of the Samaritans. Do you love them so much that you would honor them by stopping in their cities?"

"I love them not at all," said Abash spitting in contempt. "Neither Jew nor Roman are they. If this road be poorer and longer it is yet holier than the road of the heathen since it runs all the way through Jewish land. I would rather be robbed on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, as so many are, than to travel in safety through Samaria."[4]

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[2] *Father Joseph's Instruction.* It was the father's duty to instruct his son in the law and customs of the times. The mother's influence with her children was not so great as it is today. It is possible but not probable that Jesus' home influences may have been stronger from the mother than from the father. That Jesus had a tender love for his mother we have evidence for even while he suffered upon the cross he thought of her and provided for her future. See John 19:26, 7.

[3] *The Great River.* This was the Jordan river. The pilgrims to Jerusalem would travel east and south and cross the Jordan river to avoid travelling in Samaria.

Behind them he could hear men singing.[5] They were pilgrims who had joined their company from Capernaum to the north. The sound of their singing swelled louder or softer as the hills separated them. The little boy knew the words of their song for he had sung it himself.

> "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us
> go into the house of the Lord.
> Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.
> Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact
> together;
> Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the
> Lord unto the testimony of Israel, to give
> thanks unto the name of the Lord."

The shrill piping of the flute carried above the heavy voices of the men. The tramp of their marching feet was like a deeper musical note that followed the rhythm of the song.

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[4] *The Samaritans*. Samaria was a province of Palestine. It lay between Judea on the south and Galilee on the north. Its people were called Samaritans. They were in the main descendants of Hebrews but were in part of mixed blood. The Jewish people of pure Hebrew descent despised and mistreated the Samaritans, though they worshipped the same God in precisely the same way. A small sect of the Samaritans survives in Palestine today and still worships and observes the Passover as it was observed in Jesus' time. A full account of the Samaritans may be found in 2 Kings 17.

[5] *Singing*. The pilgrims would chant the Psalms of Ascent to the accompaniment of a flute. See Psalms 122-34. The Psalm quoted is the 122nd.

The sun was slow in coming but at last he came, driving the shadows before him. The morning light showed the little boy the long line of travellers who walked, with here and there a camel and its rider and now and then donkeys bearing the food and tents of some more distant pilgrims. As the sun rose higher it grew steadily warmer and the dust lay heavily over the crowded road. It would soon be time for the first meal.[6] Joshua began to wish that he had a drink of water. He drew from his girdle a few grains of parched barley and chewed them slowly. It seemed very strange to be going so far from home.

Rabbi ben Ezra walked at the head of the Nazareth group. The little boy ran forward and took hold of his hand. The old man, remembering that this was the boy's first journey, looked down kindly and smiled.

"Not tired already are you, lad?" he said. "The journey is but begun. Before darkness comes we must reach the river. This we must ford[7] for we do not wish to travel through Samaria. Whew! It grows hotter and hotter as we go downward to the river's bed. But tomorrow we will begin the long upward climb to the holy city. The road is rough too. No great man has passed this way lately.[8] Would you like to ride my donkey for a little?"

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[6] *The First Meal.* This ordinarily came about eleven o'clock in the morning.

[7] *Fording the River.* The Bible tells us of three fords across the Jordan river but we cannot be certain which one this was. Recent explorations in Palestine show the remains of a bridge in this neighborhood. But it is probable that the pilgrims forded the river. The fords of Jordan are mentioned in Judges 7:24.

"No," said the little boy firmly. "My legs are a little tired but I do not want to ride. Please tell me why Abash calls the Samaritans heathen. Are they not Hebrew people as are we? Why should we hate them?"

"They are a foreign people, my son. They are the people who followed in the footsteps of the terrible Assyrians who conquered and enslaved our people. And though they profess to worship our God they are to be despised and rejected by every loyal Jew.

"True, they live in our country between Galilee and the land of Judah but they hate us and have shown themselves our bitterest enemies.[9] Go not near them if you would be a true son of Israel."

"Is their road a better road than this?" asked the little boy as he stepped around a great stone that lay in the pathway.

"Perhaps not better than this but it is shorter and follows the heights where this one descends into the valley and compels us to ford the Jordan twice to reach Jerusalem and then to travel the robber-infested road between Jericho and the holy city, to say nothing of enduring this frightful heat. But all things have their price."

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[8] *A Rough Road.* The road the pilgrims followed would probably be no more than a narrow path. It is said that the people never repaired the roads unless they expected distinguished company. If a stone fell across the path the next traveller would merely walk around it.

[9] *Samaritan Enmity.* When some of the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple they refused to let the Samaritans help on the ground that they were not pure-blooded Jews. The Samaritans then built a temple for themselves and worshipped there.

The little boy was quiet for a long time. Hate was something he found it hard to understand.

Before the sun was at high noon they stopped for the morning meal. Beneath great oak trees on the side of a steep hill they gathered in groups and ate and rested. Mother had brought bread and some raisins. There was water from a skin bottle and a friendly goat-herd gave the little boy a drink of milk. Then they slept while the greatest heat of the day passed but early afternoon found them again on the way, and by evening they saw the river. It was not very wide nor deep here but it rushed downward between high banks and looked very muddy and swift.

There was no bridge, only a fording place, and the little boy clung tight to father Joseph's strong arm as he half swam, half waded through the warm water. When they were all safely over they lit their campfires to warm their food for they were all tired and hungry. Very soon they all slept, the little boy close to father Joseph, feeling very strange and lonely when he thought of home so far beyond the dark valley through which they had come.

Morning found them again on their way but now they were a larger company than ever for in the night more groups of people had crossed the river. They were all joyous, like people out for a holiday, and the way never seemed long or tiresome. On the evening of the third day they came to the second fording place called the ford Jabbok.[10] Here they camped again and Rabbi ben Ezra told the little boy a story of another company who had camped in this same place.

"This is the place," said Rabbi ben Ezra, "which our forefather Jacob called Penial,[11] for it is here that he wrestled all night with an angel and in the morning saw God face to face."

"It was he who dreamed of a golden ladder between heaven and earth," said the little boy, "and saw God standing in the heavens and heard His promise, then built an altar to God. I remember the story. Please tell us about his wrestling all night with an angel."

"It happened in this way. This same Jacob had grown rich and strong in the land to which he had gone when he dreamed of the golden ladder. He now had great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. He had eleven sons and many servants. He was a great, rich, strong, successful man and now he was going back home to see his old blind father and live in peace and comfort where he had so longed to be.

"The only thing that troubled him was the memory of his twin brother Esau, whom he had cheated out of his birthright of their father's blessing while they were both boys and from whose anger he had fled into a strange country.

"This brother Esau had gone away into the land of

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[10] *The Ford Jabbok.* This was presumably just above or below where the river Jabbok joins the Jordan. It was where Moses and Joshua fought the Amonites and gained the first foothold in the Promised Land. See Numbers 21:21-31. It was also the ford where Jacob crossed on his return to Hebron.

[11] *Jacob at Penial or Penual.* For an account of Jacob's journey, see Genesis 32.

Edom, vowing in his wrath and humiliation to have revenge on Jacob. In all the years that had passed Jacob had had no word of him, but in his heart he feared him. Now he was travelling heavy-laden with wealth through the land where the brother he had wronged lived. He had reason to fear, for Esau, too, had grown rich and become the leader of a band of fearless wild men in the desert country to which he had gone.

"So Jacob, coming too late to this same ford of Jabbok to set across all his herds and his people before darkness, did find it possible to send his wives and children across in safety. But he, not daring to leave his wealth unguarded by a master, lay down to sleep, expecting any moment to hear the shrill battle cries of an attacking party led by his brother and see his precious flocks and herds destroyed or driven away. He might even have to fight for his life. In such a struggle Jacob knew he would be defeated, for Esau's men were trained fighters.

"He had done all he could to forestall his angry brother. He had selected from his herds rich presents for Esau and sent them with a servant in the direction from which he expected his brother to come. Still he could not sleep but lay in his tent and thought and worried and planned and schemed through the long darkness of night. The record says that a man came and wrestled with him; that the two struggled all night until morning; that the stranger, seeing the daylight coming, commanded, 'Let me go for the day breaketh.' But Jacob panted, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'

"'What is thy name?' asked the stranger.

"'My name is Jacob.'

"'Thou shalt no more be called Jacob but Israel for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed.'

"He would not tell Jacob his own name though Jacob begged to know. Instead he struck Jacob on the thigh and so injured him that he was a cripple all the rest of his life. Then he disappeared. But Jacob called the name of the place Penual which means 'the face of God.'

"Then morning came and with it came Esau with an army of four hundred armed men at sight of which Jacob made ready to fight, although he could not hope to stand long against such odds. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him. He had freely forgiven his brother Jacob for the theft of the birthright, for he loved him still.

"And that, my boy," Rabbi ben Ezra went on, "is the meaning of the tale. To see God face to face is to love. He who loves sees God, for God is Love."

The little boy's eyes were shining. This was something he understood.

"This God who would have men forgive and love each other," he cried, "how can we learn more of Him?"

"In the Temple, lad, are learned men, wise and good who will tell you more of God. But God speaks for himself to every listening heart. Through the long night He will be with us. Only, like Jacob, we must never cease trying and we too shall learn the way of love."

Things To Find Out.

1. It took the pilgrims from Nazareth four days to walk to Jerusalem. It was about eighty miles. How long does it take us to travel eighty miles today by train? By automobile? By aeroplane?

Try to think of some advantages we enjoy because travel has been made so much easier and swifter. Can we see more of the world and so know people better? Can we enjoy more ease and comfort? Can more people have the good things of life, books, good food, many friends and beautiful things for their homes?

Try to think of some of the thoughtful, self-sacrificing men and women who have invented machinery to make travel easier. Is this Christian service?

2. The Jews hated the Samaritans for no better reason, perhaps, than that they were not of pure Jewish descent. This is what we think of as race prejudice.

Can you think of instances of race prejudice among our own people? Should one man hate and despise another because his skin is a different color or because he speaks a different language or has a different religion?

Find John 4:3-27 and read about Jesus and the Samaritan woman. You will learn that Jesus felt no race prejudice, for he talked freely and kindly with a woman of Samaria. To understand fully just how much kindness, liberality and courage this indicated on Jesus' part you must remember that his own people considered it a disgrace to speak to a Samaritan and that in this time a man might not speak to a strange woman. Jesus' kind, respectful consideration for women has done much to influence other men to treat women fairly. When Jesus was a man he said something about how to treat an enemy. Did he say to hate your enemy? Read Matthew 5:43, 4, then tell what Jesus did really say.

3. Look on page 146 and read note number 7. This will help you to remember Jacob and his dream of the golden ladder and God's promise. Jacob made his fortune and found his wife in the far country to which he was going when he had that wonderful dream. In this story he is going back home. Find Genesis 31 and read the whole story for yourself.

Which brother do you admire more, Jacob or Esau? Which was more forgiving? What did Jesus say when he was a man about being forgiving? See Luke 17:3, 4.

Things To Do.

1. Show on your sand-table model of Nazareth the road the travellers to Jerusalem would take. Make the road.

Dress some figures to represent the travellers. Make a camping place. Show how they protected themselves from cold, wild animals and enemies.

2. Find the 122nd Psalm and read it all. Would it make a good marching song? Compare it with, "Onward Christian Soldiers," which is a good marching song.

3. Act the story of Jacob and Esau after you have read it carefully. Use the words of the Bible or your own words.

Benaniah Helps the Little Boy

THE next to the last day of the journey was slower and harder than all the rest for it was up hill all of the way.[1]

Over one hill after another, up and up they climbed. Now they were in a valley with the bare rocky walls of the cliffs shutting them in on either side. Now they stood on some height where they could see the encircling hills stretching on and on. Always above them was the clear blue of the sky with the sun beating down warmer and warmer. A few vultures balanced themselves on outspread wings, almost motionless in the clear air. The road was narrow, winding and rough. This was Judea.[2]

Gone were the trees and flowers and shady pleasant valleys of Galilee. Gone were the friendly noisy villages and the flocks of sheep and goats with their lonely shepherds. This was the hill country, the mountains that lie round about Jerusalem.

The little boy was tired. His legs ached from weariness. His feet were bruised by the stones of the road.[3] But he did not complain. Mother had told him that this would be the hardest part of the road. Almost he was tempted to give up and ride Rabbi ben Ezra's donkey.

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[1] *Altitude of Jerusalem.* From Jericho to Jerusalem there is an almost steady climb upwards of 3000 feet, while the entire distance is about thirty miles. The valley of the Jordan is intensely hot and barren except for the immediate country about Jericho where there is a wonderful stream of clear cold water from a spring. Erosion has cut the hills into deep gullies and canyons of rock and bare earth. The road was little more than a rough winding trail.

[2] *Judea.* Judea was the principal province of Palestine. It was the seat of Jerusalem, the largest city and the religious center of Jewish life. It was mountainous and barren compared with Galilee. It was aside from the main-travelled roads.

Being tired was not the worst of it, either. He kept thinking about the robbers that lived in the hills.[4] At any moment they might spring out upon the pilgrims and beat and rob them. But of these thoughts he said nothing. He only plodded slowly along.

After a while his friend Benaniah, the master shepherd, overtook him as they rounded the curve of a hill and walked along with him. Benaniah was not tired. He often walked all day after his flocks up hill and down and never thought of weariness. But he seemed to know without asking that a little boy might not be able to do the same.

"Good morning, little comrade," he boomed in his big voice. "I have made you something I thought you might need before you got to Jerusalem."

"What is it?" said the little boy. He felt better already. Just to see and hear Benaniah made him forget the pain in his bruised feet.

"Here it is. I made it for you last night from a stalk of willow [5] that grew by the river brink. I have smoothed and polished it and fitted it to your hand and height. Now see if it will not help you to climb."

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[3] *Stone-Bruised Feet.* Leather sandals were worn to protect the feet, but since the roads were rough and rocky these were not enough to prevent much discomfort. That travellers suffered much from bruised and dusty feet is indicated by the custom of providing water for washing the feet at once on entering a house. When the disciples came to Jerusalem for the last supper with Jesus he washed their feet. See John 13:4-5.

[4] *Robbers in the Hills.* For a vivid story of what did sometimes happen on the Jericho road, read the parable of the good Samaritan. Luke 10:30-37.

As he spoke he placed in the little boy's hand a sturdy willow staff, strong yet light and of exactly the right length.

"Set it so," said Benaniah. "Lean your weight on it. It will pull you along like a sturdy friend."

The little boy took the staff and ran his fingers along the smooth curving head. "Did you make it just for me?" he said.

"Just for you and no other," answered Benaniah, his dark face glowing.

"How did you know how long to make it?"

"Ho, ho," laughed Benaniah. "Have I not held your hand a hundred times as we walked and talked? Your head reached just to my arm pit, so. That is how I knew. Am I right?"

"It is exactly right. You are a very wonderful man. You couldn't have done anything to help me more. I don't see how you could know so well what I needed. I do thank you."

"I was a lad myself once," Benaniah answered in his deep rumble. "My legs were short and thin and the miles long. A sturdy staff does help. Some shepherds from Edom joined us at the ford last night," he went on. "They love to sing. Perhaps they would sing now if we asked them."

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[5] *The Willow.* The willow was a well known tree or vine in Palestine. The Jews when in captivity in Babylon are said to have hung their harps on the willow trees in sign of mourning. See Psalm 137:1-2. Also Isaiah 40:4.

"Oh, do ask them. I would love to hear them sing."

"They are lusty fellows and sing with a swing that puts fresh life into one's legs though the songs are old."

"It will be all the better if we know the song too. We can sing with them. Oh, do ask them, good Benaniah." The little boy had forgotten that he was tired.

Benaniah put his fingers to his lips and sent out a shrill whistle. A swarthy fellow, far behind, his head covered by a red cloth, flung up a hand in reply and, as though they had been waiting for a signal, there rolled out a marching song that set everyone to a livelier pace.

"Oh give thanks to Jehovah
For He is good.
Oh give thanks unto God
For His mercy endureth forever.
For He hath delivered us.
He is good.
From all our enemies
He hath delivered us.
His mercy endureth
Endureth forever."

"It is a song the warriors sing when they come home victorious from battle,"[6] said Benaniah. "They sing it too in the Temple service. It is a glad song of thanksgiving."

"It is a good song. My feet keep time to it and forget to ache. But please tell me more about Jerusalem and the Temple service. That is what I keep thinking about."

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[6] *The Song.* This was the song of victory, sometimes called the National Anthem. See Psalm 118.

"My tale of the Temple would be a poor one I fear. My life has been spent in the open among sheep and cattle. Some wise teacher or priest could tell you more than I by far."

"But you have seen it, haven't you? You have been going to Jerusalem at the Passover time for many years. You know the city and the people. Please tell me something about them."

"Well, then," said Benaniah sighing as though this were a very hard task, "I know but one small part of the Temple customs very well. And that has to do with the lambs and the sheep, the rams and bullocks that are kept in the Temple and sold to the people for sacrifices.[7] It is my business to know sheep.

"There is a part of the Temple where these animals are kept for sale. A man or woman may wish to buy a dove or a lamb or even a bullock but if he has not the right coin with which to pay for it he may not make his sacrifice and so be kept from worship of Jehovah. In order that each person may have the right kind of money with which to pay, men who are called money-changers[8] come to the Temple with coins of all kinds of peoples and with scales to weigh gold and silver. If one has a piece of gold of Galilee it will not buy a lamb in Judea but must first be changed into a Judean coin. These money-changers claim that they know all kinds of money and can tell at a glance just what any coin is worth.

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[7] *Temple Sacrifices.* Sacrifices were made in the Temple service of doves, lambs, sheep, rams and bullocks. The custom was derived from more primitive forms of worship. Sacrifice was observed only in Jerusalem at this time. With the final destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. it was abandoned for good and all. The worship that the child, Jesus, knew consisted of prayer, song, the reading of Scripture and discourse of comments on the law and the prophets. There is no record of Jesus ever having offered a blood sacrifice. Neither is there evidence that he condemned the practice.

[8] *Money-Changers.* These were men who knew the rates of exchange

"Now I do not know the value of different kinds of coins but I do know lambs and sheep. When I have bred a fine strong lamb I know to the smallest farthing what it is worth and no money-changer or Temple-dealer can make me change my mind. But it is not so with others who have not had my experience with flocks. Such people get cheated and robbed at every turn. In the Temple too, where one might think a man would be safe from thieves if anywhere. It makes an honest man's blood boil with anger.

"Why, it was only last Passover time," Benaniah went on, "that Jacob, one of my own shepherds, went with coins of Galilee stamped with Herod's own image, to pay his Temple tax to the priest and was made to pay twice the amount of his tax because they claimed his coin was short in weight. After he had paid according to their measure, the poor fellow had to beg food of his friends until he could get home.

"But you will see tomorrow when you visit the

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on all kinds of money. Many kinds of coins were in circulation. Phoenician, Roman, and Greek coins were very common.

The Temple Dues could be paid only in shekels and half-shekels so that the money-changers were a necessity. It was not so much their presence in the Temple that aroused Jesus' indignation as the fact that they cheated the unwary in the amount of exchange. The money-changers were also the bankers and money-lenders. See Matthew 21:12-23.

Temple. Look for yourself, lad. There are thieves even in God's house. This Temple commerce is a trade of thieves."

"Rabbi ben Ezra told me nothing of this," said the little boy. "Do you think he knows of it?"

"Yes, the good Rabbi knows but it is not likely he would talk of it to you. Only I who am outspoken and rough would tell you of such things. Some seem to think you should not be told of any of the ugly sinful things that go on because you are so young and tender-hearted; so good and loving. But I have a feeling here," Benaniah placed his hand on his heart, "that you will see much to which others give little heed and where the helpless are wronged you will be quick to defend them. Am I not right?" Then, not waiting for an answer, he went on, "I know I am right for I have watched you with the old and feeble and with little ones and with those you love. You have an understanding heart. And a boy who can walk with blistered feet and not whine or complain will be brave enough to do what he can to right great wrongs."

Things To Find Out.

1. Find out how the country of Judea differed from the country of Galilee. Tell all you can about it, bringing out such points as the nature of the soil, the climate, the altitude, the roads and the people.

2. The people of Jesus' time wore sandals or went bare-footed. Much progress has been made in ways of making shoes since then. Find out all you can about

different kinds of shoes, how they are made and of what material.

What were the sandals made of? Were they a great protection to the foot? What did men use next after sandals for foot protection? What did God tell Moses to do with his shoes? Read Exodus 3:5 to find out.

What was it John said about Jesus' shoestrings? Read John 1:7. The first law of hospitality and courtesy to a guest in a home in Jesus' time was to offer him water to wash his feet. What did Jesus once say to Simon Peter about a discourtesy offered him? Read Luke 6:44.

3. Find Luke 10:30-37 and read the story of "The Good Samaritan." It will tell you about some of the dangers of travel on the Jericho road.

4. Have you ever heard the old song, "I'll hang my harp on a weeping willow tree?" Read Psalm 137 to learn something of the significance of the willow tree to the mourning Jews in Babylon.

5. Read Matthew 21:12, 13 to learn how Jesus felt about the money-changers in the Temple. This is one record that we have which shows that Jesus was willing to fight evil even if he had to use force. He was brave enough to do what he thought to be right.

Things To Do.

1. Show on your sand-table model how the road wound up and down and around the great hills. Tell why it was so very warm in the valley of the Jordan river.

2. Act the story of "The Good Samaritan."

The Temple Beautiful

It was very early when the little boy awoke. Only a faint glow in the eastern sky showed that it was morning. A sweet coolness and quiet lay over the crowded city that, with the full coming of the day, would hum with the voices of the joyous pilgrims to the Feast of the Passover.

It had been dark when the group from Nazareth had reached Jerusalem. Father Joseph, mother and the little boy had gone at once to the home of a kinsman where, after bathing and eating, they had slept, tired from their long hard journey.

For days and days the little boy had been thinking of the Temple. But when at last they had climbed the hills beyond Bethany, where in daylight the first glimpse of its snowy marble walls and golden turrets might be caught, it had been quite dark, a deep, soft engulfing blackness through which they walked slowly for the road was crowded with travellers.

Too weary for dreams the little boy slept through long hours but awoke with the thought, "Today I shall see the Temple, the house of God, the wondrous, holy Place of Peace." There was no more sleep for him.

He had lain close to father Joseph through the night and now, as he stirred and sat up father Joseph woke also and said softly, "What is it, son? Is it morning so soon?"

"The sky is growing bright," answered the little boy. "It will soon be full day. Couldn't we creep softly down and be the first to enter the Temple for worship?"

"A priest is standing on the highest pinnacle of the Temple watching for the first rays of the sun that he may give the signal to the trumpeters. When we hear the silver trumpet's call we shall know that the great gates of the Temple will swing open and we may go in. Let us wait here for the call. From this roof we can see the sunlight as it strikes the pinnacles of the Temple and the white-robed priests as they go about their duties. The sound of the chanting will come to us here also. Then, when it is fully day, we may go together to worship."

So, while the dawn strengthened and the shadows of darkness disappeared, the little boy and father Joseph watched and waited.

"Long, long ago," father Joseph almost whispered so that he might not disturb others who were sleeping, "our people built the first Temple in the Wilderness.[1] They had but lately escaped from Egypt and were poor and without suitable building material but God directed them. Only such as were wise and willing-hearted were permitted to help build that first place for worship as though God would have no grudging selfish service.

"And yet there rose on the burning lonely desert a tent, shaped and divided even as this great Temple, having an outer wall, inner courts and a holy of holies to shelter the tablets of the law[2] and, the sacred ark of the covenant beneath whose spreading angel's wings God dwelt.[3] Into this Tabernacle the people poured their treasure.

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[1] *The First Tabernacle.* For a description of this first Tabernacle read Exodus 25 and 26.

"I am a builder," father Joseph went on. "I know something of the cost of lumber and of the labor it means to fell a tree and cut it into boards. Yet these men, working with crude dull tools of stone and iron, not only felled the trees and planed them into lumber, but they covered the boards with gold melted in a crucible, the gold they had in their ornaments or which they found in mines. They roofed their Tabernacle with skins of goats and rams and dolphins. The loving, willing hands of the women wove and dyed and embroidered the purple curtains before the altar. Clever goldsmiths wrought the golden candle sticks and the bowls and vessels for the sacrifice. Workers in gold and precious stones made the breastplate for the high priest.[4] Thousands of loyal men and women toiled unceasingly, glad only that they might toil if by that means God could be served in thankfulness for all His goodness to them."

While they talked together the light had grown stronger. The sky was full of a soft clear radiance. A little breeze stirred the trees and vines from which came the first low calls and twitter of sleepy birds. The tips of the spires of the Temple shone like imprisoned stars. A little stir and murmur rose from the streets.

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[2] *Tablets of the Law.* These were the ten commandments graven on stone as Moses presented them to the Israelites. See Exodus 20:1-17.

[3] *Ark of the Covenant.* For a description of the ark, see Exodus 25:10-22.

[4] *Workers in Gold.* Bezaleel and Aholiab are mentioned as skillful workers in gold. Exodus 31:26.

"What became of that Tabernacle?" asked the little boy.

"In a few years our people reached the Promised Land[5] and built their homes and worshipped at many altars, in high places, under oak trees and beside streams. I do not know what became of the Tabernacle. It had been built so that it could be taken down and carried to a new location. So I have no doubt it was used for many years. But after many years our greatest king, King Solomon, the wise, built in Jerusalem another Temple like the first but larger and more costly.[6] To build it he sent to far countries for all sorts of fine material. He exchanged wheat for the cedars of Lebanon where his father's friend, Hiram, ruled.[7] He secured gold and silver from Ophir; linens and dyed stuffs from the East and stone for the foundation from the mountains. Seventy thousand burden-bearers and eighty thousand hewers of stone worked for seven years on the foundations alone. So many and so skillful were the workers upon the cedar walls of the Temple that not the sound of a hammer was heard but all were fitted together piece by piece by grooves and wooden bolts. It stood where this one stands. Its foundations rested upon the solid rock out of which had been hewn countless underground chambers connected by tunnels. All that limitless wealth, wisdom and devotion could devise went into that Temple and when it was finished it stood a fitting dwelling for the living God, even for Jehovah.

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[5] *Promised Land.* For a description of the land together with God's promise read Deuteronomy 34:1-4.

[6] *Solomon's Temple.* For a description read 1 Kings 6 and 2 Chronicles 3 and 4.

[7] *King David.* King David was the father of King Solomon. He was a friend of Hiram, King of Tyre. The story of the commerce the people of Tyre carried on with other peoples is of great interest They were the first ship builders.

"For more than five hundred years our people worshipped there in peace but it was destroyed at last; its walls burned; its golden vessels and sacred symbols, the ark and the tables of the law, destroyed or left a smoking desolation while they who had kept it with such loving devotion were driven away to exile and slavery, to years of untold suffering in foreign lands.[8]

"For long years it lay so. Then the good king Cyrus[9] allowed a few of the most loyal Hebrew people to return to Jerusalem and set, as best they could, its ruined walls in place and establish once more a Temple worship. This was called Zerubbabel's Temple."

"Is it the same as this Temple we now have?" asked the little boy.

"The Temple of Zerubbabel was almost destroyed in battle when Pompey laid siege to Jerusalem and captured it for the Romans.[10] But upon its ruins Herod the Great[11] built this for us. He has spared no expense. Its walls are of marble and its steps and pinnacles of gold. But none who see it may fail to note the golden eagles of Rome emblazoned in the banner that floats over it and few there are who trust or honor Herod, he who hated the Jews yet sought to win their tolerance by such costly gifts. Even the house of God must exist with Rome's permission. But hark! The trumpets! The watchman has seen the sun before its first rays have reached us. Now we may go in."

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[8] *Destruction of Solomon's Temple.* This took place in the year 586 B. C.

[9] *Cyrus.* The Persian king, Cyrus, permitted Nehemiah, one of the captive Jews to return with several thousand of his fellow countrymen to Jerusalem. The Temple was rebuilt in 520 B.C. by Haggai and Zachariah. Read Ezra 3:12, 13.

[10] *The Roman, Pompey.* Pompey took Jerusalem by siege in the year 63 B. C. The Temple was at that time almost altogether destroyed.

As the little boy and mother and father Joseph made their way through the narrow steep streets of Jerusalem to the first service they were overtaken and carried along by a joyous crowd of people all in their holiday best, all eager and glad to see old friends from the country, all full of happy plans for feasting and games and gossip once the sacrifices should be made and the prayers said. But to the little boy, the prayers, the songs and the sacrifices were the things of greatest importance.

Leaving the dark streets they entered the Temple through the gate Beautiful[12] and immediately the noise and clamor died away. A sweet peace and quiet lay over all, broken only by the chanting of the priests and the music of harps and cymbals. Looking upward from the gate was like looking up the golden ladder into heaven, the little boy thought, as he stood for a moment and gazed about him. Before them lay the fifteen golden steps on which the singers stood while back of these, leading up and up were more golden steps before the most holy place. On a golden altar the smoke of a sacrifice ascended into the blue of the sky while priests repeated the sacred prayers and the people, kneeling with their faces towards the altar, joined their voices in the deep responses.

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[11] *Herod the Great.* Herod the Great was the Governor of Palestine under the Romans. He spent forty-six years restoring the Temple of Zachariah. It was finished in the year 20 B.C. It was called Herod's Temple.

[12] *The Gate Beautiful.* This gate was on the east wall of the Temple. It is referred to in Acts 3:2.

The little boy dropped to his knees beside father Joseph and at once forgot every thing except that he was here at last where he had longed to be, in the house of his heavenly Father, the place where one might speak with God. He was only a little country lad, up for the first time from the village of Nazareth. He had never seen a sacrifice or heard any service other than the simple prayers and readings of the synagogue but he felt as one who had been on a long journey and had at last come home.

Almost at once he recognized the words of the prayers and with a glad little cry of surprise began to repeat them, his child's voice lost in the deep voices of the men but his spirit mingling and lost in the prayers of all. What to many gathered there was but a form, was to him the actuality and reality of his being. What others *talked about,* he *was*. "With great love hast thou loved us, O Lord our God, and with much overflowing pity hast thou pitied us, our Father and our King. For the sake of our fathers who trusted in thee . . . have mercy upon and teach us. Enlighten our eyes in thy law; cause our hearts to cleave to thy commandments; unite our hearts to love and fear thy name. . . . Thou hast chosen us from among all nations and tongues and hast in truth brought us near to thy great name . . . that we may lovingly praise thee and thy oneness. Blessed be the Lord who in love chose his people Israel."[13]

He knew also the creed which followed. Had not father Joseph taught it to him almost the first words that he could speak? Reverently he repeated it. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee shall this day be in thy heart."[14]

Then with faces hidden they listened to the priestly benediction so beautiful and comforting, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace."[15]

The service was ended. The people passed out of the Temple but the little boy went out only to return again and again. This was what he had hungered for. This was the beginning of desire and a clear purpose that grew in him until the end.

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[13] *The Prayer.* The words of the prayer used here are quoted from "Sketches of Jewish Life." Ederscheim. Page 269.

[14] *The Shema.* This was called the Jewish creed. See Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

[15] *The Benediction.* The words of this benediction could be spoken only by a priest of the tribe of Aaron. Numbers 6:24-26.

Things To Find Out.

1. Try to find out some of the ways in which our churches differ from the Temple as described here.

2. Name some of the famous and beautiful churches of the world.

3. Why should God require that the people who built the Tabernacle be willing-hearted?

4. Find Numbers 6:24-26 and read the benediction. Commit it to memory.

5. The early Hebrew people believed that their God dwelt in the Ark of the Covenant. Later they thought of God as dwelling in the Temple and that men must go to Jerusalem to worship Him but in John 4:14 Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that the time will come when men will worship the Father in spirit wherever they may be. We no longer believe that God dwells only in the church. Where then, does He dwell?

Things To Do.

Find some pictures of beautiful churches. What church in New York has been in process of being built for so long? Tell what some of them are like and point out some of the unusual features of each one.

The Question the Wise Men Asked

ON the Temple porch a little group of wise men sat and talked together.[1] The Feast of Passover was finished but crowds of people still lingered in Jerusalem. Some of them found it pleasant to visit with relatives and friends. Some had business to attend to; while a few wished to linger in the Temple and learn more of the wisdom of the Rabbis. Among these was the little boy, Joshua.

From the time he had knelt with father Joseph and joined in the prayers and the chants, watched the sacrifices and heard the readings of the law and the prophets, he had lost all thought or sense of other things. Whole groups of people were leaving Jerusalem. By every gate they were going out towards their homes. But of these he thought not at all. Each morning he went swiftly back to the Temple and stayed there as long as he could.

Even mother was forgotten and father Joseph. If he thought at all of them it was only to tell himself, "They will understand that I must be here. They will look for me here." Then he was lost again in thoughts of God.

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[1] *Temple Porches.* The Temple porches were on the inner side of the great wall that surrounded the Temple area. They were like cloisters, a double row of pillars supported by a roof of wood. The eastern side was called Solomon's porch. John 10:23. The southern side was called the Royal porch.

It was the custom of the Rabbis to sit on these porches at certain times and talk with or teach any who might care to ask questions or discuss problems of interest. It was at such a time as this that the child, Jesus, talked with the learned men. Luke 2:46, 47.

There was a question he wanted to ask the scholars and teachers in the Temple. A question that had lain unanswered in his mind since Ruth's going away. He had asked it of Rabbi ben Ezra without getting an answer that satisfied him. "Perhaps," he thought, "the old man does not know the answer." He had asked mother and father Joseph but they had not told him what he wished to know. Now he was determined to ask the wise teachers of the Temple. They surely could tell him.

When he saw them, sitting together on the porch in order that they might talk freely with the people, he went and waited silently until one spoke to him. He seemed very small and lonely there in his white tunic, his bright hair falling over his shoulders, his eyes glowing with eagerness, his face lighted from the glow of a deep inner peace into a rare beauty.

"Is there a question you would like to ask, my son?" As he spoke, the teacher laid a kind hand on the boy's shoulder. "Do not fear. Speak boldly of what is on your mind. We can at least talk about it together if it cannot be answered."

"I wanted to ask," began the little boy, then hesitated. "Rabbi ben Ezra said it was a deep question. Perhaps that means it cannot be answered but it means so much to me. Ruth was good," he hurried on. "But she died. Her mother and Dinah and I had done no wrong. Yet we miss her so. Our hearts ache. Why—

why?" he paused. "I can't say it as I should but perhaps you understand. You are so wise," he finished.[2]

All of the learned men were listening. Now they looked at each other in amazement.

"Where is your home, lad?" one asked him.

"In Nazareth of Galilee, good master."

"Are you a Son of the Commandments?"

"I am but twelve, good master. In another year I shall be old enough to understand. But speak before me now. It may be I can remember until I am older. Your words of wisdom will be in my mind. Even now I understand more than you might think."

"The lad asks the age-old question of why, if our God is just as we believe Him to be, He still allows those who love and serve Him to suffer," broke in a deep voice, harsh and cold. "He is a lad wise beyond his years. Answer him, good masters. My ears await your wisdom. Yet speak cautiously. He who confounds man's wisdom sometimes speaks through the lips of babes."[3]

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[2] *The Question.* A question of the supremest interest at this time among the Jews was stated in some such fashion as this: If death is a punishment for sin why do the good die? Can God be just and allow the good to suffer in this fashion? The Jews at this time were divided on the subject of resurrection. The Pharisees, a large party, believed in the resurrection of the body. The Sadducees, a smaller but more aristocratic and wealthy party, did not believe in a future life. See Matthew 22:23.

The early Hebrews did not believe in a future life except in some dim, shadowy, unreal way. Job is made to enunciate clearly the half-defined hope of a future life. In substance he is quoted as saying, "God will deal justly with man even if He has to provide another life after this one in which to do it." As recorded his words are, "And after this, my skin, is destroyed, then I shall behold God." Job 45:23, 27.

[3] *Wisdom Through Inspiration.* There was an old and deeply rooted

But one of the teachers, a man with a long white beard and kindly smiling lips, drew the little boy into the circle of his arms and said, "It is clear to us that you have indeed thought beyond your years that this deep question should trouble you. It has troubled many and is not yet answered.

"Have your teachers told you of the prophet Habakkuk?"

"No," answered the little boy.

"It was he who first asked the question. This is what he said.

'Art thou not from of old
O Jehovah, my holy God;
Too pure of eye to see ill,
Nor on trouble canst thou gaze.
Why then silently gaze upon traitors
When the wicked engulfeth the righteous?' [4]

"He asked the question of God and had this answer.[5]

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belief that God spoke through the lips of the simple and innocent ones, wisdom the wise could not speak. See Psalm 8:12 and Matthew 21:15, 16.

[4] *The Prophet, Habakkuk.* Of this prophet little is known except that he lived and wrote during the latter half of the seventh century before Christ. So far as is now known he was the first of the great ethical teachers of Israel to propound the question which is quoted here. It is a question which has never been answered to the satisfaction of all and may never be. But its asking marks a step in advance in religious thought at this time.

[5] *The Oracle.* Habakkuk received an answer of God to his question in the form of an oracle. It may have satisfied Habakkuk but it leaves some people in doubt as to its meaning. It was, "The just shall live by his faith." Habakkuk 12:3, 4. It would seem to imply that faith in God is enough, or should be enough, to satisfy man. Or it means that faith is a means of life. The whole question of oracles and their manner of answering vexing questions is an interesting one. See note number 5 on page 244.

'If a man has faith in God, that is enough.' Which means that faith in God makes recompense for all that can happen in the way of suffering and pain. This may have satisfied the prophet, my son, but some of us do not yet understand.

"But there is an old, old story that helps some too. It is about a man called Job.[6] He was a good man, wise and rich and happy. He had great flocks and herds, many children, a beautiful home and all that makes life happy and worthwhile. He had faith in God. He did no evil.

"Now God knew and loved Job and was proud of him. And one day he said to Satan, 'Did you see my servant, Job, how good he is and how he loves me?'

"'Yes,' answered Satan. 'No wonder Job is good. You have given him everything a man could desire. But take away all his wealth, his good reputation, his children and his home and see what Job will do. He will turn against you and hate you.'

"'I do not think he will,' God answered. 'I have such confidence in Job that I will let you do all these things to him just to prove to you that he is good. I believe he will still trust in me and serve me. Go and do what you will. Job will be true to me.'

"So Satan went away. First he caused all of Job's flocks and herds to be destroyed so that he was left poor.

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[6] *The Book of Job.* The entire book of Job is devoted to the question Habakkuk asked, only it is put in the form of a dramatic situation. The book is both a prose tale and an epic poem. The two literary forms may be easily distinguished. It is supposed to be the work of several different writers. It is an interesting story, worth reading for itself.

"Job mourned and wept but he was true to God.

"Then Satan caused all of Job's children to be killed.

"Job mourned and wept more than before but he was true to God. Then Satan caused a great sickness to come to Job. He was covered with boils from his head to his feet. Poor and childless and sick with a loathsome disease, Job sat in the ashes and mourned but he did not forsake God.

"Even his wife said to him, 'Why don't you curse God and die?'

"But Job said, 'God sends us good. Why should He not send evil? I will still believe in God.' And because he still believed in God's justice he said, 'What if all this does happen now? I know that even after I am dead I shall behold God.'

"When you are older, lad, you may read the whole story for yourself. It is enough now for you to know that Job was the first man to believe that even death could not end all. That a just God will balance things up, even if He has to provide another life after death in which to do it. Like Job, my lad, we do not clearly understand but, like him, we have faith that God's justice will satisfy us here or in the hereafter."[7]

Then, seeing the boy's face uplifted and shining the wise old teacher said, "What think you, lad? Shall this come to pass?"

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[7] *Justice Hereafter*. Whatever forces combined to influence Jesus' thought about this great question, it is certain that he believed in a future life and that a just God would reward and punish according to man's deserts. His belief may be indicated in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. See Luke 16:20, 25.

"I see more clearly now," said the little boy. "Not even death can take the good people away from God for He is Good."[8]

There was a stirring about the door. Some one had come in and was calling. The little boy looked towards the doorway. Mother stood there holding out her arms.

"Son, son," she called. "We have looked for you in sorrow. We have been so worried and frightened. Why have you treated us so?"

"I thought that you would know that I would be here. You would surely know that I must begin to do God's work in the world."

"Yes, I do know," mother answered. "But come home with us now. When you are older you shall do what you will."

"I will come," said the little boy gently.[9]

Things To Find Out.

1. The little boy asked the question, "If God is as good and as just as we believe Him to be, why does He let good people who try hard to love and serve Him, suffer sorrow and pain?"

His own answer would help us to understand that, to the one who loves good, everything, even sorrow and pain, is good. When one has a clear enduring faith in

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[8] *God is Good.* In many instances Jesus seemed to identify God with good. In one instance he is recorded to have said that God *is* good. See Matthew 19:17.

[9] *Jesus in the Temple at Twelve.* For the full account of this story read Luke 2:42, 52.

God or good he will no longer be troubled by this question.

2. Find the poem called "The Chapel of the Hermits." It was written by John Greenleaf Whittier. These verses from this poem help us to understand that we are growing towards goodness.

"Yet, sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the Eternal Right!
And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man;

That all of good the past hath had,
Remains to make our own time glad,—
Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine."

3. Find the book of Job and read it. See if you can find in it the same tale written in prose and in poetry.

Remember in reading it that it was told to illustrate a great truth. It is not to be taken as actual fact.

4. This story says that the little boy went home again with his mother and father.

Find Luke 2:51, 53 and see what happened to him after he was twelve years old.

Things To Do.

1. Tell in your own words of some growth towards *Good* that has come since Jesus' time in forms of worship.

Ask your teacher or read for yourself about sacrifices. In Jesus' time they sacrificed an animal in worship of God. What has taken the place of sacrifice in our worship? Read Mark 12:33.

2. Select some picture of the child Jesus that you like very much and paste it in your Bible or your notebook.

3. Tell what you think Jesus meant when he said, "I must be about my Father's business."

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